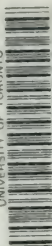


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Samuel Cleghorn Lewis.





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*THE TEMPLE DRAMATISTS*  
ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM



The text of this edition is nearly that of the first Quarto, the copy of which in the Dyce Library at South Kensington has been carefully collated. I have not noted minute variations. The German editors, Warnke and Proescholt, give the various readings of the three Quartos and of later editions.





*Tewkesbury Abbey.*



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# ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

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*Edited with a Preface, Notes  
and Glossary by*

REV. RONALD BAYNE  
M.A.

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J. M. DENT AND CO.  
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'Considering the various and marvellous gifts displayed for the first time on our stage by the great poet, the great dramatist, the strong and subtle searcher of hearts, the just and merciful judge and painter of human passions, who gave this tragedy to the new-born literature of our drama . . . I cannot but finally take heart to say, even in the absence of all external or traditional testimony, that it seems to me not pardonable merely or permissible, but simply logical and reasonable, to set down this poem, a young man's work on the face of it, as the possible work of no man's youthful hand but Shakespeare's.'

Mr. A. C. SWINBURNE.

PR  
2854  
A1  
1827

## PREFACE

**Early Editions.** On 3rd April, 1592, '*The Tragedie of Arden of Feversham and Blackwall*'<sup>1</sup> was entered on the Stationers' Registers to Edward White. In the same year appeared, '*The lamentable and true Tragedie of M. Arden of Feversham in Kent. Who was most wickedlye murdered, by the meanes of his disloyall and wanton wyfe, who for the love she bare to one Mosbie, hyred two desperat ruffins, Blackwill and Shakbag, to kill him. Wherin is shewed the great mallice and aiscimulation of a wicked woman, the unsatiable desire of filthie lust and the shamefull end of all murderers. Imprinted at London for Edward White, dwelling at the lyttle North dore of Paules Church at the signe of the Gun. 1592.*' A second Quarto, with the same title, was printed in 1599. A third, '*by Eliz. Allde dwelling neere Christs Church,*' appeared in 1633. The second and third Quartos are founded textually upon the first, and their variations are of no value. The text of the first Quarto is unusually good even when prose and verse are mixed together, although the printer has apparently no scientific knowledge of the nature of metre.

**Place of the Play in the Elizabethan Drama.** *Arden of Feversham* is the finest extant specimen of a kind of play which

<sup>1</sup> A misprint for *Blackwill*.

has been classified as Domestic Tragedy. A picturesque or sensational murder in the sixteenth century was given to the public first in popular ballads or pamphlets, and afterwards, if sufficiently notable, in the more serious Chronicle. From the popular pamphlet, or from the Chronicle, or from both together, it found its way on to the stage. Four of these 'murder-plays' have come down to us, and the titles of many others. They form a minor section of the Chronicle plays or Histories. They did not attain any very striking literary development, owing perhaps to the necessary bondage of the poet to his facts. *Arden of Feversham* is a remarkable instance of the possibilities of this class of play, but it is to be noted that the poet used the narrative of a Chronicler who wrote twenty-seven years after the date of the murder. *A Warning for Fair Women* and Yarrington's *Two Tragedies in One* are both inferior to *Arden*, though influenced by it. The fourth 'murder-play'—*The Yorkshire Tragedy*—is distinct from the other three in style and method. Several famous dramatists produced 'domestic' tragedies, but none have survived. *A Late Murder of the Son upon the Mother*, in which Ford and Webster collaborated, must have been a notable piece of work.

**Source of the Play.** On Sunday, 15th February 1550-1, Thomas Arden of Feversham, gentleman, 'was heynously murdered in his own parlour, about seven of the clock in the night, by one Thomas Morsby, a taylor of London, late servant to sir Edward North, knight, chancellor of the augmentations, father-in-law unto Alice Arden, wife of the said Thomas Arden.' Thomas Arden was Mayor of Feversham in 1548, and his murder made such a stir that in 1577 the first edition

of Holinshed's *Chronicle* devotes five pages (pp. 1703-8) to an elaborate account of it. The chronicler begins thus:—'About this time there was at Faversham in Kent a Gentleman named Arden most cruelly murthured and slain by the procurement of his own wife. The which murder for the horribleness thereof, although otherwise it may seem to be but a private matter, and therefore as it were impertinent to this History, I have thought good to set it forth somewhat at large, having the instructions delivered to me by them that have used some diligence to gather the true understanding of the circumstances.' Our first quotation was from the *Wardmote Book of Faversham*, and proves that Holinshed's narrative is not minutely accurate. The *Wardmote Book* gives a curt account of the actual murder on the Sunday evening with the names and fate of the culprits. It tells us nothing of the previous failures of these culprits which give to Holinshed's tale such a terrible and dramatic interest. We need not speculate on Holinshed's sources. No doubt there were many contemporary pamphlets and ballads which recounted the murder. We know only of *The Complaint . . . of Mistress Arden of Feversham*, preserved among the *Roxburghe Ballads*, and reprinted by Evans and in Miss De Vaynes' *Kentish Garland*. But this is dated by Mr. Bullen about 1633, when the third Quarto of the play appeared, and was probably occasioned by that re-issue. The important point to bear in mind is the excellence of Holinshed's narrative. To praise it adequately we must say that it is worthy of the fine play founded upon it, which probably had no other source. The play agrees always with Holinshed when Holinshed differs from the *Wardmote Book*. When the play differs from Holinshed it differs also from the *Wardmote Book*. To the dramatic

instinct of the poet we must ascribe his suppression of the fact that Arden winked at his wife's infidelity. Holinshed and the *Wardmote Book* both explicitly assert this. Franklin, Arden's friend, is also an invention of the dramatist.

**Author of the Play.** The three Quartos are all anonymous. We know of no other edition till 1770, when Edward Jacob, a Faversham antiquary, edited the first Quarto, and boldly claimed the play for Shakespeare. Ludwig Tieck published in 1823 an excellent German translation, accompanied by a discriminating statement of the case for the Shakespearian authorship. Delius, editing the play in 1855, agreed with Tieck, and was followed by the French translator, François Victor Hugo, and more recently by Professor Mézières. Owing to the supposed Shakespearian authorship there have been at least three translations into German, one into French, and one into Dutch. In England opinion has been more divided. Henry Tyrrell,<sup>1</sup> Charles Knight, and Mr. Swinburne<sup>2</sup> have supported the Shakespearian authorship. Professor Ward<sup>3</sup> and J. A. Symonds incline to reject it. Professor Saintsbury considers that 'the only possible hypothesis on which it could be admitted as Shakespeare's would be that of an early experiment thrown off while he was seeking his way in a direction where he found no thoroughfare.'<sup>4</sup> Mr. Bullen, who edited a careful reprint of the first Quarto in 1887, suspects 'that *Arden* in its present state has been retouched here and there by the master's hand.'

<sup>1</sup> *Doubtful Plays of Shakespeare.*

<sup>2</sup> *Study of Shakespeare.*

<sup>3</sup> *History of English Dramatic Literature.*

<sup>4</sup> *History of Elizabethan Literature.*

The latest German editors, Warnke and Proescholt (1888), 'are of opinion that Shakespeare had nothing to do with *Arden of Feversham*.'

**The Question of Shakespeare's Authorship.** The only reason for ascribing the play to Shakespeare is its merit. It seems incredible that a drama so mature in its art should have been written in 1592 by a writer otherwise unknown to us. In three directions the art of the writer is mature. First, the character of the base coward Mosbie, and of the 'bourgeois Clytemnestra,' Alice Arden, are drawn with an insight, delicacy, and sustained power new to English literature in 1592, and not excelled till Shakespeare excelled them. The picture of Arden, as a man fascinated and bewitched by his wife and by his fate, might match that of Mosbie and Alice if the artist had not blurred his conception by the introduction of the jarring motives of avarice and sacrilege. But the poet's aim is clear; it is his own, and it almost succeeds. Second, the picturesque ferocity and grim humour of Black Will and Shakebag are described with a firmness and ease and restraint of style which critics have not sufficiently noted. I can compare it only with the Jack Cade scenes of the *Contention* (and *2 Henry VI.*). The prose of our poet is excellent. His humour has a clearly defined character and style of its own. The character of Michael, so admired by Mr. Swinburne, is as subtle and well-sustained as Mosbie's or Alice Arden's, and it exhibits our poet's special humorous gift. This gift, excellent as it is, seems to me very definitely not Shakespearean. But thirdly, the terrifying use of signs and omens and of an almost

Shakespearean irony—*e.g.* Arden's words, 'I am almost stifled with this fog!'—combine to produce as the play proceeds an impressive sense of 'the slow unerring tread of assassination, balked but persevering, marching like a fate to its accomplishment.' But the special excellencies of the play are all against Shakespeare having written it by 1592. As Mr. Bullen insists, the weak point in Mr. Swinburne's criticism is the phrase 'a young man's work.' This play is not 'a young man's work.' The copiousness of the young man Shakespeare's work is the exact contrary of the deliberate anxious effort which marks the style of *Arden of Feversham* except in the prose scenes. In none of Shakespeare's plays can it be perceived that the poet has taken such pains as the poet of *Arden* takes. Unless Shakespeare wrote this play as soon as he reached London, and then for a year or two wrote nothing else, it is impossible to fit it into his work. And if he wrote the play as soon as he reached London and then took up the studies which resulted in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, would he have written *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Comedy of Errors* on his way back to work like *Arden*? If Shakespeare wrote *Arden* it is the most interesting fact in his literary development. To suggest that Shakespeare revised the play is to shirk the question. Its excellence is in its warp and woof, not in its ornaments.

**Literature.** Mr. Bullen's *Introduction* is the best monograph on the play. Warnke and Proescholt's *Introduction* should be consulted, but lacks the distinction of style and the critical insight of Mr. Bullen's essay. Excellent analyses and criticisms of the play are in Charles Knight's *Doubtful Plays*



(‘Pictorial Shakespere’); J. A. Symonds’ *Shakspeare’s Predecessors*; Alfred Mézières’ *Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de Shakspeare*. Mr. Fleay in his *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama* (1891) has suggested Kyd as the author of *Arden*.





ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THOMAS ARDEN, Gentleman, of Feversham

FRANKLIN, his Friend

MOSBIE

CLARKE, a Painter

ADAM FOWLE, Landlord of the Flower-de-Luce

BRADSHAW, a Goldsmith

MICHAEL, Arden's Servant

GREENE

RICHARD REEDE, a Sailor

BLACK WILL } Murderers

SHAKEBAG }

A PRENTICE

A FERRYMAN

LORD CHEINY, and his Men

MAYOR OF FEVERSHAM, and Watch

ALICE, Arden's Wife

SUSAN, Mosbie's Sister

# ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM

## ACT I

*A Room in Arden's House.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

*Franklin.* Arden, cheer up thy spirits, and droop no more !

My gracious Lord, the Duke of Somerset,  
Hath freely given to thee and to thy heirs,  
By letters patents from his Majesty,  
All the lands of the Abbey of Feversham.

Here are the deeds, *[He hands them.]*  
Sealed and subscribed with his name and the  
king's :

Read them, and leave this melancholy mood.

*Arden.* Franklin, thy love prolongs my weary life ;  
And but for thee how odious were this life, 10  
That shows me nothing but torments my soul,  
And those foul objects that offend mine eyes !  
Which makes me wish that for this veil of heaven  
The earth hung over my head and covered me.

Love-letters pass 'twixt Mosbie and my wife,  
And they have privy meetings in the town :  
Nay, on his finger did I spy the ring  
Which at our marriage-day the priest put on.  
Can any grief be half so great as this ?

*Franklin.* Comfort thyself, sweet friend ; it is not  
strange 20

That women will be false and wavering.

*Arden.* Ay, but to dote on such a one as he  
Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable.

*Franklin.* Why, what is he ?

*Arden.* A botcher, and no better at the first ;  
Who, by base brokage getting some small stock,  
Crept into service of a nobleman,  
And by his servile flattery and fawning  
Is now become the steward of his house,  
And bravely jets it in his silken gown. 30

*Franklin.* No nobleman will countenance such a  
peasant.

*Arden.* Yes, the Lord Clifford, he that loves not me.  
But through his favour let him not grow proud ;  
For were he by the Lord Protector backed,  
He should not make me to be pointed at.  
I am by birth a gentleman of blood,  
And that injurious ribald, that attempts  
To violate my dear wife's chastity  
(For dear I hold her love, as dear as heaven)  
Shall on the bed which he thinks to defile 40

See his dissevered joints and sinews torn,  
Whilst on the planchers pants his weary body,  
Smeared in the channels of his lustful blood.

*Franklin.* Be patient, gentle friend, and learn of me  
To ease thy grief and save her chastity :  
Intreat her fair ; sweet words are fittest engines  
To race the flint walls of a woman's breast.  
In any case be not too jealous,  
Nor make no question of her love to thee ;  
But, as securely, presently take horse, 50  
And lie with me at London all this term ;  
For women, when they may, will not,  
But, being kept back, straight grow outrageous.

*Arden.* Though this abhors from reason, yet I'll try it,  
And call her forth and presently take leave.  
How ! Alice !

*Here enters Alice.*

*Alice.* Husband, what mean you to get up so early ?  
Summer-nights are short, and yet you rise ere day.  
Had I been wake, you had not risen so soon.

*Arden.* Sweet love, thou knowest that we two, Ovid-  
like, 60  
Have often chid the morning when it 'gan to peep,  
And often wished that dark night's purblind steeds  
Would pull her by the purple mantle back,  
And cast her in the ocean to her love.

But this night, sweet Alice, thou hast killed my heart :

I heard thee call on Mosbie in thy sleep.

*Alice.* 'Tis like I was asleep when I named him,  
For being awake he comes not in my thoughts.

*Arden.* Ay, but you started up and suddenly,  
Instead of him, caught me about the neck. 70

*Alice.* Instead of him? why, who was there but you?  
And where but one is, how can I mistake?

*Franklin.* Arden, leave to urge her over-far.

*Arden.* Nay, love, there is no credit in a dream ;  
Let it suffice I know thou lovest me well.

*Alice.* Now I remember whereupon it came :

Had we no talk of Mosbie yesternight?

*Franklin.* Mistress Alice, I heard you name him once  
or twice.

*Alice.* And thereof came it, and therefore blame not  
me.

*Arden.* I know it did, and therefore let it pass. 80  
I must to London, sweet Alice, presently.

*Alice.* But tell me, do you mean to stay there long?

*Arden.* No longer there till my affairs be done.

*Franklin.* He will not stay above a month at most.

*Alice.* A month? ay me ! Sweet Arden, come again  
Within a day or two, or else I die.

*Arden.* I cannot long be from thee, gentle Alice.

Whilst Michael fetch our horses from the field.

Franklin and I will down unto the quay ;



For I have certain goods there to unload. 90  
 Meanwhile prepare our breakfast, gentle Alice ;  
 For yet ere noon we'll take horse and away.

[*Exeunt Arden and Franklin.*]

*Alice.* Ere noon he means to take horse and away !  
 Sweet news is this. O that some airy spirit  
 Would in the shape and likeness of a horse  
 Gallop with Arden 'cross the Ocean,  
 And throw him from his back into the waves !  
 Sweet Mosbie is the man that hath my heart :  
 And he usurps it, having nought but this,  
 That I am tied to him by marriage. 100  
 Love is a God, and marriage is but words ;  
 And therefore Mosbie's title is the best.  
 Tush ! whether it be or no, he shall be mine,  
 In spite of him, of Hymen, and of rites.

*Here enters Adam of the Flower-de-luce.*

And here comes Adam of the Flower-de-luce ;  
 I hope he brings me tidings of my love.  
 —How now, Adam, what is the news with you ?  
 Be not afraid ; my husband is now from home.

*Adam.* He whom you wot of, Mosbie, Mistress Alice,  
 Is come to town, and sends you word by me 110  
 In any case you may not visit him.

*Alice.* Not visit him ?

*Adam.* No, nor take no knowledge of his being here.

*Alice.* But tell me, is he angry or displeased ?

*Adam.* It should seem so, for he is wondrous sad.

*Alice.* Were he as mad as raving Hercules,  
I'll see him, I ; and were thy house of force,  
These hands of mine should race it to the ground,  
Unless that thou wouldst bring me to my love.

*Adam.* Nay, and you be so impatient, I'll be gone. 120

*Alice.* Stay, Adam, stay ; thou wert wont to be my  
friend.

Ask Mosbie how I have incurred his wrath ;  
Bear him from me these pair of silver dice,  
With which we played for kisses many a time,  
And when I lost, I won, and so did he ;—  
Such winning and such losing Jove send me !  
And bid him, if his love do not decline,  
To come this morning but along my door,  
And as a stranger but salute me there :  
This may he do without suspect or fear. 130

*Adam.* I'll tell him what you say, and so farewell.

[*Exit Adam.*]

*Alice.* Do, and one day I'll make amends for all.—

I know he loves me well, but dares not come,  
Because my husband is so jealous,  
And these my narrow-prying neighbours blab,  
Hinder our meetings when we would confer.  
But, if I live, that block shall be removed,  
And, Mosbie, thou that comes to me by stealth,  
Shalt neither fear the biting speech of men.

Nor Arden's looks ; as surely shall he die 140  
As I abhor him and love only thee.

*Here enters Michael.*

How now, Michael, whither are you going ?

*Michael.* To fetch my master's nag.

I hope you'll think on me.

*Alice.* Ay ; but, Michael, see you keep your oath,  
And be as secret as you are resolute.

*Michael.* I'll see he shall not live above a week.

*Alice.* On that condition, Michael, here's my hand :  
None shall have Mosbie's sister but thyself.

*Michael.* I understand the painter here hard by 150  
Hath made report that he and Sue is sure.

*Alice.* There's no such matter, Michael ; believe it not.

*Michael.* But he hath sent a dagger sticking in a  
heart,

With a verse or two stolen from a painted cloth,  
The which I hear the wench keeps in her chest.  
Well, let her keep it ! I shall find a fellow  
That can both write and read and make rhyme too.  
And if I do—well, I say no more :

I'll send from London such a taunting letter  
As she shall eat the heart he sent with salt 160  
And fling the dagger at the painter's head.

*Alice.* What needs all this ? I say that Susan's thine.

*Michael.* Why, then I say that I will kill my master,  
Or anything that you will have me do.

*Alice.* But, Michael, see you do it cunningly.

*Michael.* Why, say I should be took, I'll ne'er confess  
That you know anything ; and Susan, being a  
maid,

May beg me from the gallows of the sheriff.

*Alice.* Trust not to that, Michael.

*Michael.* You cannot tell me, I have seen it, I. 170  
But, mistress, tell her, whether I live or die,  
I'll make her more worth than twenty painters  
can ;

For I will rid mine elder brother away,  
And then the farm of Bolton is mine own.  
Who would not venture upon house and land,  
When he may have it for a right down blow?

*Here enters Mosbie.*

*Alice.* Yonder comes Mosbie. Michael, get thee gone,  
And let not him nor any know thy drifts.

*[Exit Michael.]*

Mosbie, my love !

*Mosbie.* Away, I say, and talk not to me now. 180

*Alice.* A word or two, sweet heart, and then I will.

'Tis yet but early days, thou needst not fear.

*Mosbie.* Where is your husband?

*Alice.* 'Tis now high water, and he is at the quay.

*Mosbie.* There let him be ; henceforward know me not.

*Alice.* Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?

Is this the fruit thy reconciliation buds?

Have I for this given thee so many favours,  
Incur'd my husband's hate, and, out alas !  
Made shipwreck of mine honour for thy sake ? 190  
And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not' ?  
Remember, when I lock'd thee in my closet,  
What were thy words and mine ; did we not both  
Decree to murder Arden in the night ?  
The heavens can witness, and the world can tell,  
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,  
'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,  
Arden to me was dearer than my soul,—  
And shall be still : base peasant, get thee gone,  
And boast not of thy conquest over me, 200  
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery !  
For what hast thou to countenance my love,  
Being descended of a noble house,  
And matched already with a gentleman  
Whose servant thou may'st be !—and so farewell.

*Mosbie.* Ungentle and unkind Alice, now I see  
That which I ever feared, and find too true :  
A woman's love is as the lightning-flame,  
Which even in bursting forth consumes itself.  
To try thy constancy have I been strange ; 210  
Would I had never tried, but lived in hope !

*Alice.* What need'st thou try me whom thou ne'er  
found false ?

*Mosbie.* Yet pardon me, for love is jealous.

*Alice.* So lists the sailor to the mermaid's song,

So looks the traveller to the basilisk :  
I am content for to be reconciled,  
And that, I know, will be mine overthrow.

*Mosbie.* Thine overthrow? first let the world dissolve.

*Alice.* Nay, Mosbie, let me still enjoy thy love,  
And happen what will, I am resolute. 220

My saving husband hoards up bags of gold  
To make our children rich, and now is he  
Gone to unload the goods that shall be thine,  
And he and Franklin will to London straight.

*Mosbie.* To London, Alice? if thou'lt be ruled by me,  
We'll make him sure enough for coming there.

*Alice.* Ah, would we could !

*Mosbie.* I happened on a painter yesternight,  
The only cunning man of Christendom ;  
For he can temper poison with his oil, 230  
That whoso looks upon the work he draws  
Shall, with the beams that issue from his sight,  
Suck venom to his breast and slay himself.  
Sweet Alice, he shall draw thy counterfeit,  
That Arden may, by gazing on it, perish.

*Alice.* Ay, but Mosbie, that is dangerous,  
For thou, or I, or any other else,  
Coming into the chamber where it hangs, may die.

*Mosbie.* Ay, but we'll have it covered with a cloth  
And hung up in the study for himself. 240

*Alice.* It may not be, for when the picture's drawn,  
Arden, I know, will come and show it me

*Mosbie.* Fear not ; we'll have that shall serve the turn.

This is the painter's house ; I'll call him forth.

*Alice.* But Mosbie, I'll have no such picture, I.

*Mosbie.* I pray thee leave it to my discretion.

How ! Clarke !

*Here enters Clarke.*

Oh, you are an honest man of your word ! you served me well.

*Clarke.* Why, sir, I'll do it for you at any time,

Provided, as you have given your word, 250

I may have Susan Mosbie to my wife.

For, as sharp-witted poets, whose sweet verse

Make heavenly gods break off their nectar draughts

And lay their ears down to the lowly earth,

Use humble promise to their sacred Muse,

So we that are the poets' favourites

Must have a love : ay, Love is the painter's muse,

That makes him frame a speaking countenance,

A weeping eye that witnesses heart's grief.

Then tell me, Master Mosbie, shall I have her ? 260

*Alice.* 'Tis pity but he should ; he'll use her well.

*Mosbie.* Clarke, here's my hand : my sister shall be thine.

*Clarke.* Then, brother, to requite this courtesy,

You shall command my life, my skill, and all.

*Alice.* Ah, that thou couldst be secret.

*Mosbie.* Fear him not ; leave ; I have talked sufficient.

*Clarke.* You know not me that ask such questions.

Let it suffice I know you love him well,  
And fain would have your husband made away :  
Wherein, trust me, you show a noble mind. 270  
That rather than you'll live with him you hate,  
You'll venture life, and die with him you love.  
The like will I do for my Susan's sake.

*Alice.* Yet nothing could inforce me to the deed  
But Mosbie's love. Might I without control  
Enjoy thee still, then Arden should not die :  
But seeing I cannot, therefore let him die.

*Mosbie.* Enough, sweet Alice ; thy kind words makes  
me melt.

Your trick of poisoned pictures we dislike ;  
Some other poison would do better far. 280

*Alice.* Ay, such as might be put into his broth,  
And yet in taste not to be found at all.

*Clarke.* I know your mind, and here I have it for you.  
Put but a dram of this into his drink,  
Or any kind of broth that he shall eat,  
And he shall die within an hour after.

*Alice.* As I am a gentlewoman, Clarke, next day  
Thou and Susan shall be married.

*Mosbie.* And I'll make her dowry more than I'll talk of,  
Clarke.

*Clarke.* Yonder's your husband. Mosbie, I'll be  
gone. 290



*Here enters Arden and Franklin.*

*Alice.* In good time see where my husband comes.

Master Mosbie, ask him the question yourself.

*[Exit Clarke.*

*Mosbie.* Master Arden, being at London yesternight,  
The Abbey lands, whereof you are now possessed,  
Were offered me on some occasion  
By Greene, one of Sir Antony Ager's men :  
I pray you, sir, tell me, are not the lands yours ?  
Hath any other interest herein ?

*Arden.* Mosbie, that question we'll decide anon.

Alice, make ready my breakfast, I must hence. 300

*[Exit Alice.*

As for the lands, Mosbie, they are mine  
By letters patents from his Majesty.  
But I must have a mandate for my wife ;  
They say you seek to rob me of her love :  
Villain, what makes thou in her company ?  
She's no companion for so base a groom.

*Mosbie.* Arden, I thought not on her, I came to thee ;  
But rather than I pocket up this wrong——

*Franklin.* What will you do, sir ?

*Mosbie.* Revenge it on the proudest of you both. 310

*[Then Arden draws forth Mosbie's sword.*

*Arden.* So, sirrah ; you may not wear a sword,  
The statute makes against artificers ;  
I warrant that I do. Now use your bodkin,

Your Spanish needle, and your pressing iron,  
For this shall go with me ; and mark my words,  
You goodman botcher, 'tis to you I speak :  
The next time that I take thee near my house,  
Instead of legs I'll make thee crawl on stumps.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Arden, you have injured me :

I do appeal to God and to the world. 320

*Franklin.* Why, canst thou deny thou wert a botcher  
once ?

*Mosbie.* Measure me what I am, not what I was.

*Arden.* Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,  
A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant ?

*Mosbie.* Arden, now thou hast belched and vomited  
The rancorous venom of thy mis-swoll'n heart,  
Hear me but speak : as I intend to live  
With God and his elected saints in heaven,  
I never meant more to solicit her ;  
And that she knows, and all the world shall see. 330  
I loved her once ;—sweet Arden, pardon me,  
I could not choose, her beauty fired my heart !  
But time hath quenched these over-raging coals ;  
And, Arden, though I now frequent thy house,  
'Tis for my sister's sake, her waiting-maid,  
And not for hers. Mayest thou enjoy her long :  
Hell-fire and wrathful vengeance light on me,  
If I dishonour her or injure thee.

*Arden.* Mosbie, with these thy protestations  
The deadly hatred of my heart's appeased, 340

And thou and I'll be friends, if this prove true.  
As for the base terms I gave thee late,  
Forget them, Mosbie : I had cause to speak,  
When all the knights and gentlemen of Kent  
Make common table-talk of her and thee.

*Mosbie.* Who lives that is not touched with slanderous  
tongues ?

*Franklin.* Then, Mosbie, to eschew the speech of men,  
Upon whose general bruit all honour hangs,  
Forbear his house.

*Arden.* Forbear it ! nay, rather frequent it more :     350  
The world shall see that I distrust her not.  
To warn him on the sudden from my house  
Were to confirm the rumour that is grown.

*Mosbie.* By my faith, sir, you say true,  
And therefore will I sojourn here a while,  
Until our enemies have talked their fill ;  
And then, I hope, they'll cease, and at last confess  
How causeless they have injured her and me.

*Arden.* And I will lie at London all this term  
To let them see how light I weigh their words.     360

*Here enters Alice.*

*Alice.* Husband, sit down ; your breakfast will be cold.

*Arden.* Come, Master Mosbie, will you sit with us ?

*Mosbie.* I cannot eat, but I'll sit for company.

*Arden.* Sirrah Michael, see our horse be ready.

*Alice.* Husband, why pause ye ? why eat you not ?

*Arden.* I am not well ; there 's something in this broth  
That is not wholesome : didst thou make it, Alice ?

*Alice.* I did, and that 's the cause it likes not you.

[*Then she throws down the broth on the ground.*]

There 's nothing that I do can please your taste ;  
You were best to say I would have poisoned  
you. 370

I cannot speak or cast aside my eye,  
But he imagines I have stepped awry.  
Here 's he that you cast in my teeth so oft :  
Now will I be convinced or purge myself.  
I charge thee speak to this mistrustful man,  
Thou that wouldst see me hang, thou, Mosbie, thou :  
What favour hast thou had more than a kiss  
At coming or departing from the town ?

*Mosbie.* You wrong yourself and me to cast these  
doubts :

Your loving husband is not jealous. 380

*Arden.* Why, gentle Mistress Alice, cannot I be ill  
But you 'll accuse yourself ?

Franklin, thou hast a box of mithridate ;  
I 'll take a little to prevent the worst.

*Franklin.* Do so, and let us presently take horse ;  
My life for yours, ye shall do well enough.

*Alice.* Give me a spoon, I 'll eat of it myself ;  
Would it were full of poison to the brim,  
Then should my cares and troubles have an end.  
Was ever silly woman so tormented ? 390

*Arden.* Be patient, sweet love ; I mistrust not thee.

*Alice.* God will revenge it, Arden, if thou dost ;  
For never woman loved her husband better  
Than I do thee.

*Arden.* I know it, sweet Alice ; cease to complain,  
Lest that in tears I answer thee again.

*Franklin.* Come, leave this dallying, and let us away.

*Alice.* Forbear to wound me with that bitter word ;  
Arden shall go to London in my arms.

*Arden.* Loth am I to depart, yet I must go. 400

*Alice.* Wilt thou to London, then, and leave me  
here ?

Ah, if thou love me, gentle Arden, stay.  
Yet, if thy business be of great import  
Go, if thou wilt, I'll bear it as I may ;  
But write from London to me every week,  
Nay, every day, and stay no longer there  
Than thou must needs, lest that I die for sorrow.

*Arden.* I'll write unto thee every other tide,  
And so farewell, sweet Alice, till we meet next.

*Alice.* Farewell, husband, seeing you'll have it so ; 410  
And, Master Franklin, seeing you take him hence,  
In hope you'll hasten him home, I'll give you  
this.

[*And then she kisses him.*]

*Franklin.* And if he stay, the fault shall not be mine.  
Mosbie, farewell, and see you keep your oath.

*Mosbie.* I hope he is not jealous of me now.

*Arden.* No, Mosbie, no ; hereafter think of me  
As of your dearest friend, and so farewell.

[*Exeunt Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*]

*Alice.* I am glad he is gone ; he was about to stay,  
But did you mark me then how I brake off?

*Mosbie.* Ay, Alice, and it was cunningly performed. 420  
But what a villain is that painter Clarke !

*Alice.* Was it not a goodly poison that he gave ?  
Why, he's as well now as he was before.  
It should have been some fine confection  
That might have given the broth some dainty taste :  
This powder was too gross and populous.

*Mosbie.* But had he eaten but three spoonfuls more,  
Then had he died and our love continued.

*Alice.* Why, so it shall, Mosbie, albeit he live.

*Mosbie.* It is impossible, for I have sworn 430  
Never hereafter to solicit thee,  
Or, whilst he lives, once more importune thee.

*Alice.* Thou shalt not need, I will importune thee.  
What ? shall an oath make thee forsake my love ?  
As if I have not sworn as much myself  
And given my hand unto him in the church !  
Tush, Mosbie ; oaths are words, and words is wind,  
And wind is mutable : then, I conclude,  
'Tis childishness to stand upon an oath.

*Mosbie.* Well proved, Mistress Alice ; yet by your  
leave 440  
I'll keep mine unbroken whilst he lives.

*Alice.* Ay, do, and spare not, his time is but short ;  
 For if thou beest as resolute as I,  
 We'll have him murdered as he walks the streets.  
 In London many alehouse ruffians keep,  
 Which, as I hear, will murder men for gold.  
 They shall be soundly fee'd to pay him home.

*Here enters Greene.*

*Mosbie.* Alice, what's he that comes yonder? knowest  
 thou him?

*Alice.* Mosbie, be gone : I hope 'tis one that comes  
 To put in practice our intended drifts. 450

*[Exit Mosbie]*

*Greene.* Mistress Arden, you are well met.  
 I am sorry that your husband is from home,  
 Whenas my purposed journey was to him :  
 Yet all my labour is not spent in vain,  
 For I suppose that you can full discourse  
 And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.

*Alice.* What is it, Master Greene? If that I may  
 Or can with safety, I will answer you.

*Greene.* I heard your husband hath the grant of late,  
 Confirmed by letters patents from the king, 460  
 Of all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham,  
 Generally intituled, so that all former grants  
 Are cut off ; whereof I myself had one ;  
 But now my interest by that is void.  
 This is all, Mistress Arden ; is it true or no

*Alice.* True, Master Greene ; the lands are his in state,  
And whatsoever leases were before  
Are void for term of Master Arden's life ;  
He hath the grant under the Chancery seal.

*Greene.* Pardon me, Mistress Arden, I must speak, 470  
For I am touched. Your husband doth me wrong  
To wring me from the little land I have.  
My living is my life, and only that  
Resteth remainder of my portion.  
Desire of wealth is endless in his mind,  
And he is greedy-gaping still for gain ;  
Nor cares he though young gentlemen do beg,  
So he may scrape and hoard up in his pouch.  
But, seeing he hath ta'en my lands, I'll value life  
As careless as he is careful for to get : 480  
And tell him this from me, I'll be revenged,  
And so as he shall wish the Abbey lands  
Had rested still within their former state.

*Alice.* Alas, poor gentleman, I pity you,  
And woe is me that any man should want !  
God knows 'tis not my fault ; but wonder not  
Though he be hard to others, when to me,—  
Ah, Master Greene, God knows how I am used.

*Greene.* Why, Mistress Arden, can the crabbed churl  
Use you unkindly ? respects he not your birth, 490  
Your honourable friends, nor what you brought ?  
Why, all Kent knows your parentage and what  
you are.



*Alice.* Ah, Master Greene, be it spoken in secret here,  
 I never live good day with him alone :  
 When he's at home, then have I froward looks,  
 Hard words and blows to mend the match withal ;  
 And though I might content as good a man,  
 Yet doth he keep in every corner trulls ;  
 And when he's weary with his trugs at home,  
 Then rides he straight to London ; there, for-  
 sooth, 500  
 He revels it among such filthy ones  
 As counsels him to make away his wife.  
 Thus live I daily in continual fear,  
 In sorrow ; so despairing of redress  
 As every day I wish with hearty prayer  
 That he or I were taken forth the world.

*Greene.* Now trust me, Mistress Alice, it grieveth me  
 So fair a creature should be so abused.  
 Why, who would have thought the civil sir so  
 sullen ?  
 He looks so smoothly. Now, fie upon him,  
 churl ! 510  
 And if he live a day, he lives too long.  
 But frolic, woman ! I shall be the man  
 Shall set you free from all this discontent ;  
 And if the churl deny my interest  
 And will not yield my lease into my hand,  
 I'll pay him home, whatever hap to me.

*Alice.* But speak you as you think ?

*Greene.* Ay, God's my witness, I mean plain dealing,  
For I had rather die than lose my land.

*Alice.* Then, Master Greene, be counselled by me : 520  
Indanger not yourself for such a churl,  
But hire some cutter for to cut him short,  
And here's ten pound to wager them withal ;  
When he is dead, you shall have twenty more,  
And the lands whereof my husband is possess'd  
Shall be intitled as they were before.

*Greene.* Will you keep promise with me ?

*Alice.* Or count me false and perjured whilst I live.

*Greene.* Then here's my hand, I'll have him so dispatched.

I'll up to London straight, I'll thither post, 530  
And never rest till I have compassed it.  
Till then farewell.

*Alice.* Good fortune follow all your forward thoughts.

[*Exit Greene.*]

And whosoever doth attempt the deed,  
A happy hand I wish, and so farewell.—  
All this goes well : Mosbie, I long for thee  
To let thee know all that I have contrived.

*Here enters Mosbie and Clarke.*

*Mosbie.* How, now, Alice, what's the news?

*Alice.* Such as will content thee well, sweetheart.

*Mosbie.* Well, let them pass a while, and tell me, Alice,

How have you dealt and tempered with my sister ?

What, will she have my neighbour Clarke, or no ?

*Alice.* What, Master Mosbie ! let him woo himself !

Think you that maids look not for fair words ?

Go to her, Clarke ; she's all alone within ;

Michael my man is clean out of her books.

*Clarke.* I thank you, Mistress Arden, I will in ;

And if fair Susan and I can make a gree,

You shall command me to the uttermost,

As far as either goods or life may stretch. 550

[*Exit Clarke.*]

*Mosbie.* Now, Alice, let's hear thy news.

*Alice.* They be so good that I must laugh for joy,

Before I can begin to tell my tale.

*Mosbie.* Let's hear them, that I may laugh for company.

*Alice.* This morning, Master Greene, Dick Greene I mean,

From whom my husband had the Abbey land,

Came hither, railing, for to know the truth

Whether my husband had the lands by grant.

I told him all, whereat he stormed amain

And swore he would cry quittance with the  
churl, 560

And, if he did deny his interest,

Stab him, whatsoever did befall himself.

Whenas I saw his choler thus to rise,

I whetted on the gentleman with words ;

And, to conclude, Mosbie, at last we grew

To composition for my husband's death.

I gave him ten pound for to hire knaves,  
By some device to make away the churl ;  
When he is dead, he should have twenty more  
And repossess his former lands again. 570  
On this we 'greed, and he is ridden straight  
To London, for to bring his death about.

*Mosbie.* But call you this good news ?

*Alice.* Ay, sweetheart, be they not ?

*Mosbie.* 'Twere cheerful news to hear the churl were  
dead ;

But trust me, Alice, I take it passing ill  
You would be so forgetful of our state  
To make recount of it to every groom.  
What ! to acquaint each stranger with our drifts,  
Chiefly in case of murder, why, 'tis the way 580  
To make it open unto Arden's self  
And bring thyself and me to ruin both.  
Forewarned, forearmed ; who threatens his enemy,  
Lends him a sword to guard himself withal.

*Alice.* I did it for the best.

*Mosbie.* Well, seeing 'tis done, cheerly let it pass.

You know this Greene ; is he not religious ?

A man, I guess, of great devotion ?

*Alice.* He is.

*Mosbie.* Then, sweet Alice, let it pass : I have a  
drift 590

Will quiet all, whatever is amiss.

*Here enters Clarke and Susan.*

*Alice.* How now, Clarke? have you found me false?

Did I not plead the matter hard for you?

*Clarke.* You did.

*Mosbie.* And what? wilt be a match?

*Clarke.* A match, i' faith, sir: ay, the day is mine.

The painter lays his colours to the life,

His pencil draws no shadows in his love.

Susan is mine.

*Alice.* You make her blush.

600

*Mosbie.* What, sister, is it Clarke must be the man?

*Susan.* It resteth in your grant; some words are past,

And haply we be grown unto a match,

If you be willing that it shall be so.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Clarke, it resteth at my grant:

You see my sister's yet at my dispose,

But, so you'll grant me one thing I shall ask,

I am content my sister shall be yours.

*Clarke.* What is it, Master Mosbie?

*Mosbie.* I do remember once in secret talk

610

You told me how you could compound by art

A crucifix impoisoned,

That whoso look upon it should wax blind

And with the scent be stifled, that ere long

He should die poisoned that did view it well.

I would have you make me such a crucifix,

And then I'll grant my sister shall be yours.

*Clarke.* Though I am loth, because it toucheth life,  
Yet, rather or I'll leave sweet Susan's love,  
I'll do it, and with all the haste I may. 620  
But for whom is it?

*Alice.* Leave that to us. Why, Clarke, is it possible  
That you should paint and draw it out yourself,  
The colours being baleful and impoisoned,  
And no ways prejudice yourself withal?

*Mosbie.* Well questioned, Alice; Clarke, how answer  
you that?

*Clarke.* Very easily: I'll tell you straight  
How I do work of these impoisoned drugs.  
I fasten on my spectacles so close  
As nothing can any way offend my sight; 630  
Then, as I put a leaf within my nose,  
So put I rhubarb to avoid the smell,  
And softly as another work I paint.

*Mosbie.* 'Tis very well; but against when shall I have it?

*Clarke.* Within this ten days.

*Mosbie.* 'Twill serve the turn.  
Now, Alice, let's in and see what cheer you keep.  
I hope, now Master Arden is from home,  
You'll give me leave to play your husband's part.

*Alice.* Mosbie, you know, who's master of my heart,  
He well may be the master of the house. 640

[*Exeunt.*]

## ACT II

## SCENE I

*Country between Feversham and London.*

*Enter Greene and Bradshaw.*

*Bradshaw.* See you them that comes yonder, Master Greene?

*Greene.* Ay, very well: do you know them?

*Here enters Black Will and Shakebag.*

*Bradshaw.* The one I know not, but he seems a knave  
Chiefly for bearing the other company;  
For such a slave, so vile a rogue as he,  
Lives not again upon the earth.  
Black Will is his name. I tell you, Master Greene,  
At Boulogne he and I were fellow-soldiers,  
Where he played such pranks  
As all the camp feared him for his villainy 10  
I warrant you he bears so bad a mind  
That for a crown he'll murder any man.

*Greene.* The fitter is he for my purpose, marry!

*Will.* How now, fellow Bradshaw? Whither away so early?

*Bradshaw.* O Will, times are changed : no fellows now,  
Though we were once together in the field ;  
Yet thy friend to do thee any good I can.

*Will.* Why, Bradshaw, was not thou and I fellow-soldiers at Boulogne, where I was a corporal, and thou but a base mercenary groom? No fellows now ! because you are a goldsmith and have a little plate in your shop ! You were glad to call me 'fellow Will,' and with a curtsey to the earth, 'One snatch, good corporal,' when I stole the half ox from John the victualer, and domineer'd with it amongst good fellows in one night.

*Bradshaw.* Ay, Will, those days are past with me. 27

*Will.* Ay, but they be not past with me, for I keep that same honourable mind still. Good neighbour Bradshaw, you are too proud to be my fellow ; but were it not that I see more company coming down the hill, I would be fellows with you once more, and share crowns with you too. But let that pass, and tell me whither you go.

*Bradshaw.* To London, Will, about a piece of service,  
Wherein haply thou mayest pleasure me.

*Will.* What is it?

*Bradshaw.* Of late Lord Cheiny lost some plate,  
Which one did bring and sold it at my shop,  
Saying he served Sir Antony Cooke.



A search was made, the plate was found with me,  
And I am bound to answer at the 'size.  
Now, Lord Cheiny solemnly vows, if law  
Will serve him, he'll hang me for his plate.  
Now I am going to London upon hope  
To find the fellow. Now, Will, I know  
Thou art acquainted with such companions.

*Will.* What manner of man was he?

*Bradshaw.* A lean-faced writhen knave,  
Hawk-nosed and very hollow-eyed, 50  
With mighty furrows in his stormy brows ;  
Long hair down his shoulders curled ;  
His chin was bare, but on his upper lip  
A mutchado, which he wound about his ear.

*Will.* What apparel had he?

*Bradshaw.* A watchet satin doublet all-to torn,  
The inner side did bear the greater show ;  
A pair of thread-bare velvet hose, seam rent,  
A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,  
A livery cloak, but all the lace was off ; 60  
'Twas bad, but yet it served to hide the plate.

*Will.* Sirrah Shakebag, canst thou remember since we  
trolled the bowl at Sittingburgh, where I broke the  
tapster's head of the Lion with a cudgel-stick?

*Shakebag.* Ay, very well, Will.

*Will.* Why, it was with the money that the plate was  
sold for. Sirrah Bradshaw, what wilt thou give him  
that can tell thee who sold thy plate?

*Bradshaw.* Who, I pray thee, good Will?

*Will.* Why, 'twas one Jack Fitten. He's now in Newgate for stealing a horse, and shall be arraigned the next 'size. 72

*Bradshaw.* Why, then let Lord Cheiny seek Jack Fitten forth,

For I'll back and tell him who robbed him of his plate.

This cheers my heart; Master Greene, I'll leave you,  
For I must to the Isle of Sheppy with speed.

*Greene.* Before you go, let me intreat you  
To carry this letter to Mistress Arden of Feversham  
And humbly recommend me to herself.

*Bradshaw.* That will I, Master Greene, and so farewell. So  
Here, Will, there's a crown for thy good news.

[*Exit Bradshaw.*]

*Will.* Farewell, Bradshaw; I'll drink no water for thy  
sake whilst this lasts.—Now, gentleman, shall we  
have your company to London?

*Greene.* Nay, stay, sirs:

A little more I needs must use your help,  
And in a matter of great consequence,  
Wherein if you'll be secret and profound,  
I'll give you twenty angels for your pains. 89

*Will.* How? twenty angels? give my fellow George  
Shakebag and me twenty angels? And if thou'lt  
have thy own father slain, that thou may'st inherit  
his land, we'll kill him. 90

*Shakebag.* Ay, thy mother, thy sister, thy brother, or all thy kin.

*Greene.* Well, this it is : Arden of Feversham

Hath highly wronged me about the Abbey land,

That no revenge but death will serve the turn.

Will you two kill him? here's the angels down,

And I will lay the platform of his death. 100

*Will.* Plat me no platforms ; give me the money, and I'll stab him as he stands pissing against a wall, but I'll kill him.

*Shakebag.* Where is he?

*Greene.* He is now at London, in Aldersgate Street.

*Shakebag.* He's dead as if he had been condemned by an Act of Parliament, if once Black Will and I swear his death.

*Greene.* Here is ten pound, and when he is dead,

Ye shall have twenty more. 110

*Will.* My fingers itches to be at the peasant. Ah, that I might be set a work thus through the year, and that murder would grow to an occupation, that a man might follow without danger of law :—zounds, I warrant I should be warden of the company ! Come, let us be going, and we'll bait at Rochester, where I'll give thee a gallon of sack to handsel the match withal. [Exit.

## SCENE II

*London. A Street near St. Paul's.*

*Enter Michael.*

*Michael.* I have gotten such a letter as will touch the painter : And thus it is :

*Here enters Arden and Franklin and hears Michael read this letter.*

‘ My duty remembered, Mistress Susan, hoping in God you be in good health, as I Michael was at the making hereof. This is to certify you that as the turtle true, when she hath lost her mate, sitteth alone, so I, mourning for your absence, do walk up and down Paul’s till one day I fell asleep and lost my master’s pantofles. Ah, Mistress Susan, abolish that paltry painter, cut him off by the shins with a frowning look of your crabbed countenance, and think upon Michael, who, drunk with the dregs of your favour, will cleave as fast to your love as a plaster of pitch to a galled horse-back. Thus hoping you will let my passions penetrate, or rather impetrate mercy of your meek hands, I end.

‘ Yours, Michael, or else not Michael.’

*Arden.* Why, you paltry knave,  
Stand you here loitering, knowing my affairs,  
What haste my business craves to send to Kent? 20

*Franklin.* Faith, friend Michael, this is very ill,  
Knowing your master hath no more but you,  
And do ye slack his business for your own?

*Arden.* Where is the letter, sirrah? let me see it.  
[*Then he gives him the letter.*]

See, Master Franklin, here's proper stuff:  
Susan my maid, the painter, and my man,  
A crew of harlots, all in love, forsooth;  
Sirrah, let me hear no more of this,  
Nor for thy life once write to her a word.

*Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*

Wilt thou be married to so base a trull? 30  
'Tis Mosbie's sister: come I once at home,  
I'll rouse her from remaining in my house.  
Now, Master Franklin, let us go walk in Paul's;  
Come but a turn or two, and then away.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Greene.* The first is Arden, and that's his man,  
The other is Franklin, Arden's dearest friend.

*Will.* Zounds, I'll kill them all three.

*Greene.* Nay, sirs, touch not his man in any case;  
But stand close, and take you fittest standing,  
And at his coming forth speed him: 40

To the Nag's Head, there is this coward's haunt.  
But now I'll leave you till the deed be done.

[*Exit Greene.*]

*Shakebag.* If he be not paid his own, ne'er trust Shakebag.

*Will.* Sirrah Shakebag, at his coming forth I'll run him through, and then to the Blackfriars, and there take water and away.

*Shakebag.* Why, that's the best; but see thou miss him not.

*Will.* How can I miss him, when I think on the forty angels I must have more?

*Here enters Prentice.*

*Prentice.* 'Tis very late; I were best shut up my stall, for here will be old filching, when the press comes forth of Paul's.

52

[*Then lets he down his window, and it breaks Black Will's head.*]

*Will.* Zounds, draw, Shakebag, I am almost killed.

*Prentice.* We'll tame you, I warrant.

*Will.* Zounds, I am tame enough already.

*Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

*Arden.* What troublesome fray or mutiny is this?

*Franklin.* 'Tis nothing but some brabbling paltry fray,  
Devised to pick men's pockets in the throng.

*Arden.* Is't nothing else? come, Franklin, let's away.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Will.* What 'mends shall I have for my broken head? 60

*Prentice.* Marry, this 'mends, that if you get you not away all the sooner, you shall be well beaten and sent to the Counter. *[Exit Prentice.*

*Will.* Well, I'll be gone, but look to your signs, for I'll pull them down all. Shakebag, my broken head grieves me not so much as by this means Arden hath escaped.

*Here enters Greene.*

I had a glimpse of him and his companion.

*Greene.* Why, sirs, Arden's as well as I ; I met him and Franklin going merrily to the ordinary. What, dare you not do it? 71

*Will.* Yes, sir, we dare do it ; but, were my consent to give again, we would not do it under ten pound more. I value every drop of my blood at a French crown. I have had ten pound to steal a dog, and we have no more here to kill a man ; but that a bargain is a bargain, and so forth, you should do it yourself.

*Greene.* I pray thee, how came thy head broke?

*Will.* Why, thou seest it is broke, dost thou not? 79

*Shakebag.* Standing against a stall, watching Arden's coming, a boy let down his shop-window and broke his head ; whereupon arose a brawl, and in the tumult Arden escaped us and passed by unthought on. But forbearance is no acquittance ; another time we'll do it, I warrant thee.

*Greene.* I pray thee, Will, make clean thy bloody brow,

And let us bethink us on some other place  
Where Arden may be met with handsomely.  
Remember how devoutly thou hast sworn  
To kill the villain ; think upon thine oath. 90

*Will.* Tush, I have broken five hundred oaths !  
But wouldst thou charm me to effect this deed,  
Tell me of gold, my resolution's fee ;  
Say thou seest Mosbie kneeling at my knees,  
Offering me service for my high attempt,  
And sweet Alice Arden, with a lap of crowns,  
Comes with a lowly curtsey to the earth,  
Saying ' Take this but for thy quarterage,  
Such yearly tribute will I answer thee.'  
Why, this would steel soft-mettled cowardice, 100  
With which Black Will was never tainted yet.  
I tell thee, Greene, the forlorn traveller,  
Whose lips are glued with summer's parching heat,  
Ne'er longed so much to see a running brook  
As I to finish Arden's tragedy.  
Seest thou this gore that cleaveth to my face?  
From hence ne'er will I wash this bloody stain,  
Till Arden's heart be panting in my hand.

*Greene.* Why, that's well said ; but what saith Shake-  
bag ?

*Shakebag.* I cannot paint my valour out with words : 110  
But, give me place and opportunity,  
Such mercy as the starven lioness,  
When she is dry sucked of her eager young,



Shows to the prey that next encounters her,  
On Arden so much pity would I take.

*Greene.* So should it fare with men of firm resolve.  
And now, sirs, seeing that this accident  
Of meeting him in Paul's hath no success,  
Let us bethink us of some other place  
Whose earth may swallow up this Arden's blood.

*Here enters Michael.*

See, yonder comes his man : and wot you what ? 121  
The foolish knave's in love with Mosbie's sister,  
And for her sake, whose love he cannot get  
Unless Mosbie solicit his suit,  
The villain hath sworn the slaughter of his master.  
We'll question him, for he may stead us much,—  
How now, Michael, whither are you going ?

*Michael.* My master hath new supped,  
And I am going to prepare his chamber.

*Greene.* Where supped Master Arden ? 130

*Michael.* At the Nag's Head, at the eighteen pence  
ordinary. How now, Master Shakebag ? what,  
Black Will ! God's dear lady, how chance your  
face is so bloody ?

*Will.* Go to, sirrah, there is a chance in it ; this sauci-  
ness in you will make you be knocked.

*Michael.* Nay, an you be offended, I'll be gone.

*Greene.* Stay, Michael, you may not escape us so.  
Michael, I know you love your master well.

*Michael.* Why, so I do ; but wherefore urge you that ?

*Greene.* Because I think you love your mistress better.

*Michael.* So think not I ; but say, i' faith, what, if I should ?

*Shakebag.* Come to the purpose, Michael ; we hear 143

You have a pretty love in Feversham.

*Michael.* Why, have I two or three, what's that to thee !

*Will.* You deal too mildly with the peasant. Thus it is :

'Tis known to us that you love Mosbie's sister ;

We know besides that you have ta'en your oath

To further Mosbie to your mistress' bed,

And kill your master for his sister's sake.

Now, sir, a poorer coward than yourself 150

Was never fostered in the coast of Kent :

How comes it then that such a knave as you

Dare swear a matter of such consequence ?

*Greene.* Ah, Will——

*Will.* Tush, give me leave, there's no more but this :

Sith thou hast sworn, we dare discover all ;

And hadst thou or should'st thou utter it,

We have devised a complat under hand,

Whatever shall betide to any of us,

To send thee roundly to the devil of hell. 160

And therefore thus : I am the very man,

Marked in my birth-hour by the destinies,

To give an end to Arden's life on earth ;

Thou but a member but to whet the knife

Whose edge must search the closet of his breast :

Thy office is but to appoint the place,

And train thy master to his tragedy ;  
Mine to perform it when occasion serves.  
Then be not nice, but here devise with us  
How and what way we may conclude his death. 170

*Shakebag.* So shalt thou purchase Mosbie for thy  
friend,

And by his friendship gain his sister's love.

*Greene.* So shall thy mistress be thy favourer,  
And thou disburdened of the oath thou made.

*Michael.* Well, gentlemen, I cannot but confess,  
Sith you have urged me so apparently,  
That I have vowed my master Arden's death ;  
And he whose kindly love and liberal hand  
Doth challenge nought but good deserts of  
me,

I will deliver over to your hands. 180

This night come to his house at Aldersgate :  
The doors I'll leave unlock'd against you come.  
No sooner shall ye enter through the latch,  
Over the threshold to the inner court,  
But on your left hand shall you see the stairs  
That leads directly to my master's chamber :  
There take him and dispose him as ye please.  
Now it were good we parted company ;  
What I have promised, I will perform.

*Will.* Should you deceive us, 'twould go wrong with  
you. 190

*Michael.* I will accomplish all I have revealed.

*Will.* Come, let's go drink : choler makes me as dry as  
a dog. 190

[*Exeunt Will, Greene, and Shakebag.*  
*Manet Michael.*

*Michael.* Thus feeds the lamb securely on the down,  
Whilst through the thicket of an arbour brake  
The hunger-bitten wolf o'erpries his haunt  
And takes advantage for to eat him up.  
Ah, harmless Arden, how hast thou misdone,  
That thus thy gentle life is levelled at?  
The many good turns that thou hast done to me. 200  
Now must I quittance with betraying thee.  
I that should take the weapon in my hand  
And buckler thee from ill-intending foes,  
Do lead thee with a wicked fraudulent smile,  
As unsuspected, to the slaughter-house.  
So have I sworn to Mosbie and my mistress,  
So have I promised to the slaughtermen ;  
And should I not deal currently with them,  
Their lawless rage would take revenge on me.  
Tush, I will spurn at mercy for this once : 210  
Let pity lodge where feeble women lie,  
I am resolved, and Arden needs must die.

[*Exit Michael.*

## ACT III

## SCENE I

*A Room in Franklin's House, at Aldersgate.*

*Enter Arden and Franklin.*

*Arden.* No, Franklin, no : if fear or stormy threats,  
If love of me or care of womanhood,  
If fear of God or common speech of men,  
Who mangle credit with their wounding words,  
And couch dishonour as dishonour buds,  
Might join repentance in her wanton thoughts,  
No question then but she would turn the leaf  
And sorrow for her dissolution ;  
But she is rooted in her wickedness,  
Perverse and stubborn, not to be reclaimed ;      10  
Good counsel is to her as rain to weeds,  
And reprehension makes her vice to grow  
As Hydra's head that plenisht by decay.  
Her faults, methink, are painted in my face,  
For every searching eye to overread ;  
And Mosbie's name, a scandal unto mine,

Is deeply trenchèd in my blushing brow.  
Ah, Franklin, Franklin, when I think on this,  
My heart's grief rends my other powers  
Worse than the conflict at the hour of death. 20

*Franklin.* Gentle Arden, leave this sad lament :  
She will amend, and so your griefs will cease ;  
Or else she'll die, and so your sorrows end.  
If neither of these two do haply fall,  
Yet let your comfort be that others bear  
Your woes, twice doubled all, with patience.

*Arden.* My house is irksome ; there I cannot rest.

*Franklin.* Then stay with me in London ; go not home.

*Arden.* Then that base Mosbie doth usurp my room  
And makes his triumph of my being thence. 30  
At home or not at home, where'er I be,  
Here, here it lies, ah Franklin, here it lies  
That will not out till wretched Arden dies.

*Here enters Michael.*

*Franklin.* Forget your griefs a while ; here comes your  
man.

*Arden.* What a-clock is 't, sirrah ?

*Michael.* Almost ten.

*Arden.* See, see, how runs away the weary time !  
Come, Master Franklin, shall we go to bed ?

*[Exeunt Arden and Michael.*

*Manet Franklin.*

*Franklin.* I pray you, go before : I'll follow you.

—Ah, what a hell is fretful jealousy ! 40  
What pity-moving words, what deep-fetched sighs,  
What grievous groans and overlading woes  
Accompanies this gentle gentleman !  
Now will he shake his care-oppressèd head,  
Then fix his sad eyes on the sullen earth,  
Ashamed to gaze upon the open world ;  
Now will he cast his eyes up towards the heavens,  
Looking that ways for redress of wrong :  
Sometimes he seeketh to beguile his grief  
And tells a story with his careful tongue ; 50  
Then comes his wife's dishonour in his thoughts  
And in the middle cutteth off his tale,  
Pouring fresh sorrow on his weary limbs.  
So woe-begone, so inly charged with woe,  
Was never any lived and bare it so.

*Here enters Michael.*

*Michael.* My master would desire you come to bed.

*Franklin.* Is he himself already in his bed ?

*[Exit Franklin. Manet Michael.]*

*Michael.* He is, and fain would have the light away.

—Conflicting thoughts, encampèd in my breast,  
Awake me with the echo of their strokes, 60  
And I, a judge to censure either side,  
Can give to neither wishèd victory.  
My master's kindness pleads to me for life  
With just demand, and I must grant it him :

My mistress she hath forced me with an oath,  
For Susan's sake, the which I may not break,  
For that is nearer than a master's love :  
That grim-faced fellow, pitiless Black Will,  
And Shakebag, stern in bloody stratagem,  
—Two rougher ruffians never lived in Kent,— 70  
Have sworn my death, if I infringe my vow,  
A dreadful thing to be considered of.  
Methinks I see them with their bolstered hair  
Staring and grinning in thy gentle face,  
And in their ruthless hands their daggers drawn,  
Insulting o'er thee with a peck of oaths,  
Whilst thou submissive, pleading for relief,  
Art mangled by their ireful instruments.  
Methinks I hear them ask where Michael is,  
And pitiless Black Will cries : ' Stab the slave ! 80  
The peasant will detect the tragedy ! '  
The wrinkles in his foul death-threat'ning face  
Gapes open wide, like graves to swallow men.  
My death to him is but a merriment,  
And he will murder me to make him sport.  
He comes, he comes ! ah, Master Franklin, help !  
Call on the neighbours, or we are but dead !

*Here enters Franklin and Arden.*

*Franklin.* What dismal outcry calls me from my rest ?

*Arden.* What hath occasioned such a fearful cry ?

Speak, Michael : hath any injured thee ? 90



*Michael.* Nothing, sir ; but as I fell asleep,  
Upon the threshold leaning to the stairs,  
I had a fearful dream that troubled me,  
And in my slumber thought I was beset  
With murderer thieves that came to rifle me.  
My trembling joints witness my inward fear :  
I crave your pardons for disturbing you.

*Arden.* So great a cry for nothing I ne'er heard.  
What? are the doors fast locked and all things  
safe?

*Michael.* I cannot tell ; I think I locked the doors. 100

*Arden.* I like not this, but I'll go see myself.—  
Ne'er trust me but the doors were all unlocked :  
This negligence not half contenteth me.  
Get you to bed, and if you love my favour,  
Let me have no more such pranks as these.  
Come, Master Franklin, let us go to bed.

*Franklin.* Ay, by my faith ; the air is very cold.  
Michael, farewell ; I pray thee dream no more.

[*Excunt.*]

## SCENE II

*Outside Franklin's house.*

*Here enters Will, Greene, and Shakebag.*

*Shakebag.* Black night hath hid the pleasures of the day,  
And sheeting darkness overhangs the earth,  
And with the black fold of her cloudy robe

Obscures us from the eyesight of the world,  
In which sweet silence such as we triumph.  
The lazy minutes linger on their time,  
As loth to give due audit to the hour,  
Till in the watch our purpose be complete  
And Arden sent to everlasting night.

Greene, get you gone, and linger here about,      10  
And at some hour hence come to us again,  
Where we will give you instance of his death.

*Greene.* Speed to my wish, whose will so e'er says  
no ;

And so I'll leave you for an hour or two.

[*Exit Greene.*]

*Will.* I tell thee, Shakebag, would this thing were  
done :

I am so heavy that I can scarce go ;  
This drowsiness in me bodes little good.

*Shakebag.* How now, Will ? become a precisian ?  
Nay, then let's go sleep, when bugs and fears  
Shall kill our courages with their fancy's work.      20

*Will.* Why, Shakebag, thou mistakes me much,  
And wrongs me too in telling me of fear.  
Were't not a serious thing we go about,  
It should be slipt till I had fought with thee,  
To let thee know I am no coward, I.

I tell thee, Shakebag, thou abusest me.

*Shakebag.* Why, thy speech bewrayed an inly kind of  
fear,

And savoured of a weak relenting spirit.

Go forward now in that we have begun,

And afterwards attempt me when thou darest. 30

*Will.* And if I do not, heaven cut me off!

But let that pass, and show me to this house,

Where thou shalt see I'll do as much as Shakebag.

*Shakebag.* This is the door; but soft, methinks 'tis shut.

The villain Michael hath deceived us.

*Will.* Soft, let me see, Shakebag; 'tis shut indeed.

Knock with thy sword, perhaps the slave will hear.

*Shakebag.* It will not be; the white-livered peasant

Is gone to bed, and laughs us both to scorn.

*Will.* And he shall buy his merriment as dear 40

As ever coistril bought so little sport:

Ne'er let this sword assist me when I need,

But rust and canker after I have sworn,

If I, the next time that I meet the hind,

Lop not away his leg, his arm, or both.

*Shakebag.* And let me never draw a sword again,

Nor prosper in the twilight, cockshut light,

When I would fleece the wealthy passenger,

But lie and languish in a loathsome den,

Hated and spit at by the goers-by, 50

And in that death may die unpitied,

If I, the next time that I meet the slave,

Cut not the nose from off the coward's face

And trample on it for this villainy.

*Will.* Come, let's go seek out Greene; I know he'll swear.

*Shakebag.* He were a villain, an he would not swear.

'Twould make a peasant swear among his boys,  
That ne'er durst say before but 'yea' and 'no,'  
To be thus flouted of a coistril.

*Will.* Shakebag, let's seek out Greene, and in the  
morning 60

At the alehouse butting Arden's house  
Watch the out-coming of that prick-eared cur,  
And then let me alone to handle him. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III

*Room in Franklin's house as before.*

*Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

*Arden.* Sirrah, get you back to Billingsgate  
And learn what time the tide will serve our turn;  
Come to us in Paul's. First go make the bed,  
And afterwards go hearken for the flood.

[*Exit Michael.*]

Come, Master Franklin, you shall go with me.  
This night I dreamt that, being in a park,  
A toil was pitched to overthrow the deer,  
And I upon a little rising hill  
Stood whistly watching for the herd's approach.

Even there, methoughts, a gentle slumber took me, 10  
And summoned all my parts to sweet repose ;  
But in the pleasure of this golden rest  
An ill-thewed foster had removed the toil,  
And rounded me with that beguiling home  
Which late, methought, was pitched to cast the  
deer.

With that he blew an evil-sounding horn,  
And at the noise another herdman came,  
With falchion drawn, and bent it at my breast,  
Crying aloud, ' Thou art the game we seek !'  
With this I woke and trembled every joint, 20  
Like one obscured in a little bush,  
That sees a lion foraging about,  
And, when the dreadful forest-king is gone,  
He pries about with timorous suspect  
Throughout the thorny casements of the brake,  
And will not think his person dangerless,  
But quakes and shivers, though the cause be gone :  
So, trust me, Franklin, when I did awake,  
I stood in doubt whether I waked or no :  
Such great impression took this fond surprise. 30  
God grant this vision bedee me any good.

*Franklin.* This fantasy doth rise from Michael's  
fear,

Who being awaked with the noise he made,  
His troubled senses yet could take no rest ;  
And this, I warrant you, procured your dream

*Arden.* It may be so, God frame it to the best :

But oftentimes my dreams presage too true.

*Franklin.* To such as note their nightly fantasies,

Some one in twenty may incur belief ;

But use it not, 'tis but a mockery. 40

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin ; we'll now walk in Paul's

And dine together at the ordinary,

And by my man's direction draw to the quay,

And with the tide go down to Feversham.

Say, Master Franklin, shall it not be so ?

*Franklin.* At your good pleasure, sir ; I'll bear you  
company. [Exeunt.

#### SCENE IV

*Aldersgate.*

*Here enters Michael at one door.*

*Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag at  
another door.*

*Will.* Draw, Shakebag, for here 's that villain Michael.

*Greene.* First, Will, let's hear what he can say.

*Will.* Speak, milksop slave, and never after speak.

*Michael.* For God's sake, sirs, let me excuse myself :

For here I swear, by heaven and earth and all,

I did perform the utmost of my task,

And left the doors unbolted and unlocked.

But see the chance : Franklin and my master  
Were very late conferring in the porch,  
And Franklin left his napkin where he sat                    10  
With certain gold knit in it, as he said.  
Being in bed, he did bethink himself,  
And coming down he found the doors unshut :  
He locked the gates, and brought away the keys,  
For which offence my master rated me.  
But now I am going to see what flood it is,  
For with the tide my master will away ;  
Where you may front him well on Rainham Down,  
A place well-fitting such a stratagem.

*Will.* Your excuse hath somewhat mollified my choler.

Why now, Greene, 'tis better now nor e'er it was. 21

*Greene.* But, Michael, is this true?

*Michael.* As true as I report it to be true.

*Shakebag.* Then, Michael, this shall be your penance,  
To feast us all at the Salutation,  
Where we will plat our purpose thoroughly.

*Greene.* And, Michael, you shall bear no news of this  
tide,

Because they two may be in Rainham Down  
Before your master.

*Michael.* Why, I'll agree to anything you'll have me,  
So you will except of my company.                    [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V

*Arden's House at Feversham.**Here enters Mosbie.*

*Mosbie.* Disturbèd thoughts drives me from company  
And dries my marrow with their watchfulness ;  
Continual trouble of my moody brain  
Feebles my body by excess of drink,  
And nips me as the bitter north-east wind  
Doth check the tender blossoms in the spring.  
Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,  
That tables not with foul suspicion ;  
And he but pines amongst his delicates,  
Whose troubled mind is stuffed with discontent. 10  
My golden time was when I had no gold ;  
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure ;  
My daily toil begat me night's repose,  
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.  
But since I climbed the top-bough of the tree  
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,  
Each gentle stirry gale doth shake my bed,  
And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.  
But whither doth contemplation carry me ?  
The way I seek to find, where pleasure dwells, 20  
Is hedged behind me that I cannot back,



But needs must on, although to danger's gate.  
Then, Arden, perish thou by that decree ;  
For Greene doth ear the land and weed thee up  
To make my harvest nothing but pure corn.  
And for his pains I'll hive him up a while,  
And after smother him to have his wax :  
Such bees as Greene must never live to sting.  
Then is there Michael and the painter too,  
Chief actors to Arden's overthrow ; 30  
Who when they shall see me sit in Arden's seat,  
They will insult upon me for my meed,  
Or fright me by detecting of his end.  
I'll none of that, for I can cast a bone  
To make these curs pluck out each other's throat,  
And then am I sole ruler of mine own.  
Yet Mistress Arden lives ; but she's myself,  
And holy Church rites makes us two but one.  
But what for that ? I may not trust you, Alice :  
You have supplanted Arden for my sake, 40  
And will extirpen me to plant another.  
'Tis fearful sleeping in a serpent's bed,  
And I will cleanly rid my hands of her.

*Here enters Alice.*

But here she comes, and I must flatter her.  
—How now, Alice ? what, sad and passionate ?  
Make me partaker of thy pensiveness :  
Fire divided burns with lesser force.

*Alice.* But I will dam that fire in my breast  
Till by the force thereof my part consume.  
Ah, Mosbie !

50

*Mosbie.* Such deep pathaires, like to a cannon's  
burst

Discharged against a ruinated wall,  
Breaks my relenting heart in thousand pieces.  
Ungentle Alice, thy sorrow is my sore ;  
Thou know'st it well, and 'tis thy policy  
To forge distressful looks to wound a breast  
Where lies a heart that dies when thou art sad.  
It is not love that loves to anger love.

*Alice.* It is not love that loves to murder love.

*Mosbie.* How mean you that ?

60

*Alice.* Thou knowest how dearly Arden loved me.

*Mosbie.* And then ?

*Alice.* And then—conceal the rest, for 'tis too bad,  
Lest that my words be carried with the wind,  
And published in the world to both our shames.  
I pray thee, Mosbie, let our springtime wither ;  
Our harvest else will yield but loathsome weeds.  
Forget, I pray thee, what hath passed betwixt us,  
For how I blush and tremble at the thoughts !

*Mosbie.* What ? are you changed ?

70

*Alice.* Ay, to my former happy life again,  
From title of an odious strumpet's name  
To honest Arden's wife, not Arden's honest wife.  
Ha, Mosbie ! 'tis thou has rified me of that

And made me slanderous to all my kin ;  
Even in my forehead is thy name ingraven,  
A mean artificer, that low-born name.  
I was bewitched : woe worth the hapless hour  
And all the causes that enchanted me !

*Mosbie.* Nay, if you ban, let me breathe curses forth, 80  
And if you stand so nicely at your fame,  
Let me repent the credit I have lost.  
I have neglected matters of import  
That would have stated me above thy state,  
Forslowed advantages, and spurned at time :  
Ay, Fortune's right hand Mosbie hath forsook  
To take a wanton giglot by the left.  
I left the marriage of an honest maid,  
Whose dowry would have weighed down all thy  
wealth,  
Whose beauty and demeanour far exceeded thee : 90  
This certain good I lost for changing bad,  
And wrapt my credit in thy company.  
I was bewitched,—that is no theme of thine,  
And thou unhallowed has enchanted me.  
But I will break thy spells and exorcisms,  
And put another sight upon these eyes  
That showed my heart a raven for a dove.  
Thou art not fair, I viewed thee not till now ;  
Thou art not kind, till now I knew thee not ;  
And now the rain hath beaten off thy guilt, 100  
Thy worthless copper shows thee counterfeit.

It grieves me not to see how foul thou art,  
But mads me that ever I thought thee fair.  
Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds ;  
I am too good to be thy favourite.

*Alice.* Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true,  
Which often hath been told me by my friends,  
That Mosbie loves me not but for my wealth,  
Which too incredulous I ne'er believed.  
Nay, hear me speak, Mosbie, a word or two ;    110  
I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly.  
Look on me, Mosbie, or I'll kill myself :  
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look.  
If thou cry war, there is no peace for me ;  
I will do penance for offending thee,  
And burn this prayer-book, where I here use  
The holy word that had converted me.  
See, Mosbie, I will tear away the leaves,  
And all the leaves, and in this golden cover  
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell ;    120  
And thereon will I chiefly meditate,  
And hold no other sect but such devotion.  
Wilt thou not look ? is all thy love o'erwhelmed ?  
Wilt thou not hear ? what malice stops thine ears ?  
Why speaks thou not ? what silence ties thy tongue ?  
Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,  
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,  
And spoke as smoothly as an orator,  
When I have bid thee hear or see or speak,

And art thou sensible in none of these? 130  
Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault,  
And I deserve not Mosbie's muddy looks.  
A fence of trouble is not thickened still :  
Be clear again, I 'll ne'er more trouble thee.

*Mosbie.* O no, I am a base artificer :  
My wings are feathered for a lowly flight.  
Mosbie? fie! no, not for a thousand pound.  
Make love to you? why, 'tis unpardonable ;  
We beggars must not breathe where gentles are.

*Alice.* Sweet Mosbie is as gentle as a king, 140  
And I too blind to judge him otherwise.  
Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands,  
Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns ;  
So, whatsoe'er my Mosbie's father was,  
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

*Mosbie.* Ah, how you women can insinuate,  
And clear a trespass with your sweet-set tongue !  
I will forget this quarrel, gentle Alice,  
Provided I 'll be tempted so no more.

*Here enters Bradshaw.*

*Alice.* Then with thy lips seal up this new-made match.

*Mosbie.* Soft, Alice, here comes somebody. 151

*Alice.* How now, Bradshaw, what 's the news with you?

*Bradshaw.* I have little news, but here 's a letter  
That Master Greene importuned me to give you.

*Alice.* Go in, Bradshaw ; call for a cup of beer ;

'Tis almost supper-time, thou shalt stay with us.

[*Exit Bradshaw.*]

*Then she reads the letter.*

'We have missed of our purpose at London, but shall perform it by the way. We thank our neighbour Bradshaw.—Yours, Richard Greene.'

How likes my love the tenor of this letter ? 160

*Mosbie.* Well, were his date completed and expired.

*Alice.* Ah, would it were ! Then comes my happy hour :

Till then my bliss is mixed with bitter gall.

Come, let us in to shun suspicion.

*Mosbie.* Ay, to the gates of death to follow thee. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE VI

*Country near Rochester.*

*Here enters Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*

*Shakebag.* Come, Will, see thy tools be in a readiness !

Is not thy powder dank, or will thy flint strike fire ?

*Will.* Then ask me if my nose be on my face,

Or whether my tongue be frozen in my mouth.

Zounds, here's a coil !

You were best swear me on the interrogatories

How many pistols I have took in hand,  
Or whether I love the smell of gunpowder,  
Or dare abide the noise the dag will make,  
Or will not wink at flashing of the fire. 10

I pray thee, Shakebag, let this answer thee,  
That I have took more purses in this down  
Than e'er thou handledst pistols in thy life.

*Shakebag.* Ay, haply thou has picked more in a throng:  
But, should I brag what booties I have took,  
I think the overplus that 's more than thine  
Would mount to a greater sum of money  
Then either thou or all thy kin are worth.  
Zounds, I hate them as I hate a toad  
That carry a muscado in their tongue, 20  
And scarce a hurting weapon in their hand.

*Will.* O Greene, intolerable !

It is not for mine honour to bear this.  
Why, Shakebag, I did serve the king at Boulogne,  
And thou canst brag of nothing that thou hast done.

*Shakebag.* Why, so can Jack of Feversham,  
That sounded for a fillip on the nose,  
When he that gave it him holloed in his ear,  
And he supposed a cannon-bullet hit him.

*Then they fight.*

*Greene.* I pray you, sirs, list to Æsop's talk : 30  
Whilst two stout dogs were striving for a bone,  
There comes a cur and stole it from them both ;

So, while you stand striving on these terms of  
manhood,

Arden escapes us, and deceives us all.

*Shakebag.* Why, he begun.

*Will.* And thou shalt find I'll end ;

I do but slip it until better time :

But, if I do forget——

*[Then he kneels down and holds up  
his hands to heaven.]*

*Greene.* Well, take your fittest standings, and once  
more

Lime well your twigs to catch this wary bird.

I'll leave you, and at your dag's discharge 40

Make towards, like the longing water-dog

That coucheth till the fowling-piece be off,

Then seizeth on the prey with eager mood.

Ah, might I see him stretching forth his limbs,

As I have seen them beat their wings ere now !

*Shakebag.* Why, that thou shalt see, if he come this way.

*Greene.* Yes, that he doth, Shakebag, I warrant thee :

But brawl not when I am gone in any case.

But, sirs, be sure to speed him when he comes,

And in that hope I'll leave you for an hour. 50

*[Exit Greene.]*

*Here enters Arden, Franklin, and Michael.*

*Michael.* 'Twere best that I went back to Rochester :

The horse halts downright ; it were not good



He travelled in such pain to Feversham ;  
Removing of a shoe may haply help it.

*Arden.* Well, get you back to Rochester : but, sirrah, see  
Ye o'ertake us ere we come to Rainham Down,  
For 't will be very late ere we get home.

*Michael.* Ay, God he knows, and so doth Will and  
Shakebag,

That thou shalt never go further than that down ;  
And therefore have I pricked the horse on purpose,  
Because I would not view the massacre. 61

[*Exit Michael.*

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin, onwards with your tale.

*Franklin.* I do assure you, sir, you task me much :

A heavy blood is gathered at my heart,  
And on the sudden is my wind so short  
As hindereth the passage of my speech ;  
So fierce a qualm yet ne'er assailed me.

*Arden.* Come, Master Franklin, let us go on softly :

The annoyance of the dust or else some meat  
You ate at dinner cannot brook with you. 70  
I have been often so, and soon amended.

*Franklin.* Do you remember where my tale did leave ?

*Arden.* Ay, where the gentleman did check his wife.

*Franklin.* She being reprehended for the fact,  
Witness produced that took her with the deed,  
Her glove brought in which there she left behind,  
And many other assured arguments,  
Her husband asked her whether it were not so.

*Arden.* Her answer then? I wonder how she looked,  
Having forsworn it with such vehement oaths, 80  
And at the instant so approved upon her.

*Franklin.* First did she cast her eyes down to the earth,  
Watching the drops that fell amain from thence ;  
Then softly draws she forth her handkercher,  
And modestly she wipes her tear-stained face ;  
Them hemmed she out, to clear hervoice should seem,  
And with a majesty addressed herself  
To encounter all their accusations.—

Pardon me, Master Arden, I can no more ;  
This fighting at my heart makes short my wind. 90

*Arden.* Come, we'are almost now at Rainham Down :

Your pretty tale beguiles the weary way ;

I would you were in state to tell it out.

*Shakebag.* Stand close, Will, I hear them coming.

*Here enters Lord Cheiny with his men.*

*Will.* Stand to it, Shakebag, and be resolute.

*L. Cheiny.* Is it so near night as it seems,

Or will this black-faced evening have a shower?

—What, Master Arden? you are well met,

I have longed this fortnight's day to speak with  
you :

You are a stranger, man, in the Isle of Sheppy. 100

*Arden.* Your honour's always ! bound to do you service.

*L. Cheiny.* Come you from London, and ne'er a man  
with you?

*Arden.* My man's coming after, but here's

My honest friend that came along with me.

*L. Cheiny.* My Lord Protector's man I take you to be.

*Franklin.* Ay, my good lord, and highly bound to you.

*L. Cheiny.* You and your friend come home and sup  
with me.

*Arden.* I beseech your honour pardon me ;

I have made a promise to a gentleman,

My honest friend, to meet him at my house ; 110

The occasion is great, or else would I wait on  
you.

*L. Cheiny.* Will you come to-morrow and dine with  
me,

And bring your honest friend along with you?

I have divers matters to talk with you about.

*Arden.* To-morrow we'll wait upon your honour.

*L. Cheiny.* One of you stay my horse at the top of the  
hill.

—What ! Black Will ? for whose purse wait you ?

Thou wilt be hanged in Kent, when all is done.

*Will.* Not hanged, God save your honour ;

I am your bedesman, bound to pray for you. 120

*L. Cheiny.* I think thou ne'er said'st prayer in all thy  
life.—

One of you give him a crown :—

And, sirrah, leave this kind of life ;

If thou beest tainted for a penny-matter,

And come in question, surely thou wilt truss.

—Come, Master Arden, let us be going ;  
Your way and mine lies four miles together.

[*Exeunt. Manet Black Will and Shakebag.*]

*Will.* The devil break all your necks at four miles' end !

Zounds, I could kill myself for very anger !

His lordship chops me in,

130

Even when my dag was levelled at his heart.

I would his crown were molten down his throat.

*Shakebag.* Arden, thou hast wondrous holy luck.

Did ever man escape as thou hast done ?

Well, I'll discharge my pistol at the sky,

For by this bullet Arden might not die.

*Here enters Greene.*

*Greene.* What, is he down ? is he dispatched ?

*Shakebag.* Ay, in health towards Feversham, to shame  
us all.

*Greene.* The devil he is ! why, sirs, how escaped he ?

*Shakebag.* When we were ready to shoot,

140

Comes my Lord Cheiny to prevent his death.

*Greene.* The Lord of Heaven hath preserved him.

*Will.* Preserved a fig ! The Lord Cheiny hath pre-  
served him,

And bids him to a feast to his house at Shorlow.

But by the way once more I'll meet with him,

And, if all the Cheinies in the world say no,

I'll have a bullet in his breast to-morrow.

Therefore come, Greene, and let us to Feversham.

*Greene.* Ay, and excuse ourselves to Mistress Arden :

O, how she'll chafe when she hears of this ! 150

*Shakebag.* Why, I'll warrant you she'll think we dare  
not do it.

*Will.* Why, then let us go, and tell her all the matter,  
And plat the news to cut him off to-morrow.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV

## SCENE I

*Arden's House at Feversham.*

*Here enters Arden and his wife, Franklin, and Michael*

*Arden.* See how the hours, the gardant of heaven's  
gate,

Have by their toil removed the darksome clouds,  
That Sol may well discern the trampled path  
Wherein he wont to guide his golden car ;  
The season fits ; come, Franklin, let 's away.

*Alice.* I thought you did pretend some special hunt,  
That made you thus cut short the time of rest.

*Arden.* It was no chase that made me rise so early,  
But, as I told thee yesternight, to go  
To the Isle of Sheppy, there to dine with my Lord  
Cheiny ;

10

For so his honour late commanded me.

*Alice.* Ay, such kind husbands seldom want excuses ;  
Home is a wild cat to a wandering wit.

The time hath been,—would God it were not past,—

That honour's title nor a lord's command  
Could once have drawn you from these arms of  
mine.

But my deserts or your desires decay,  
Or both ; yet if true love may seem desert,  
I merit still to have thy company.

*Franklin.* Why, I pray you, sir, let her go along with  
us ; 20

I am sure his honour will welcome her  
And us the more for bringing her along.

*Arden.* Content ; sirrah, saddle your mistress' nag.

*Alice.* No, begged favour merits little thanks ;  
If I should go, our house would run away,  
Or else be stolen ; therefore I'll stay behind.

*Arden.* Nay, see how mistaking you are ! I pray thee,  
go.

*Alice.* No, no, not now.

*Arden.* Then let me leave thee satisfied in this,  
That time nor place nor persons alter me, 30  
But that I hold thee dearer than my life.

*Alice.* That will be seen by your quick return.

*Arden.* And that shall be ere night, and if I live.  
Farewell, sweet Alice, we mind to sup with thee.

[*Exit Alice.*]

*Franklin.* Come, Michael, are our horses ready ?

*Michael.* Ay, your horse are ready but I am not ready,  
for I have lost my purse, with six and thirty  
shillings in it, with taking up of my master's nag.

*Franklin.* Why, I pray you, let us go before,  
Whilst he stays behind to seek his purse. 40

*Arden.* Go to, sirrah, see you follow us to the Isle of  
Sheppy

To my Lord Cheiny's, where we mean to dine.

[*Exeunt Arden and Franklin. Manet Michael.*]

*Michael.* So, fair weather after you, for before you lies  
Black Will and Shakebag in the broom close, too  
close for you : they'll be your ferrymen to long  
home.

*Here enters the Painter.*

But who is this? the painter, my corrival, that  
would needs win Mistress Susan.

*Clarke.* How now, Michael? how doth my mistress and  
all at home?

*Michael.* Who? Susan Mosbie? she is your mistress,  
too? 50

*Clarke.* Ay, how doth she and all the rest?

*Michael.* All's well but Susan ; she is sick.

*Clarke.* Sick? Of what disease?

*Michael.* Of a great fever.

*Clarke.* A fear of what?

*Michael.* A great fever.

*Clarke.* A fever? God forbid !

*Michael.* Yes, faith, and of a lordaine, too, as big as  
yourself.

*Clarke.* O, Michael, the spleen prickles you. Go to,  
you carry an eye over Mistress Susan. 60



*Michael.* I' faith, to keep her from the painter.

*Clarke.* Why more from a painter than from a serving creature like yourself?

*Michael.* Because you painters make but a painting table of a pretty wench, and spoil her beauty with blotting.

*Clarke.* What mean you by that?

*Michael.* Why, that you painters paint lambs in the lining of wenches' petticoats, and we serving-men put horns to them to make them become sheep. 70

*Clarke.* Such another word will cost you a cuff or a knock.

*Michael.* What, with a dagger made of a pencil? Faith, 'tis too weak, and therefore thou too weak to win Susan.

*Clarke.* Would Susan's love lay upon this stroke.

*[Then he breaks Michael's head.]*

*Here enters Mosbie, Greene, and Alice.*

*Alice.* I'll lay my life, this is for Susan's love.

Stayed you behind your master to this end?

Have you no other time to brable in

But now when serious matters are in hand?—

Say, Clarke, hast thou done the thing thou promised? 80

*Clarke.* Ay, here it is; the very touch is death

*Alice.* Then this, I hope, if all the rest do fail,

Will catch Master Arden,

And make him wise in death that lived a fool.  
Why should he thrust his sickle in our corn,  
Or what hath he to do with thee, my love,  
Or govern me that am to rule myself?  
Forsooth, for credit sake, I must leave thee !  
Nay, he must leave to live that we may love,     "  
May live, may love ; for what is life but love ?     90  
And love shall last as long as life remains,  
And life shall end before my love depart.

*Mosbie.* Why, what is love without true constancy?  
Like to a pillar built of many stones,  
Yet neither with good mortar well compact  
Nor with cement to fasten it in the joints,  
But that it shakes with every blast of wind,  
And, being touched, straight falls unto the earth,  
And buries all his haughty pride in dust.  
No, let our love be rocks of adamant,     100  
Which time nor place nor tempest can asunder.

*Greene.* Mosbie, leave protestations now,  
And let us bethink us what we have to do.  
Black Will and Shakebag I have placed i' the  
broom,  
Close watching Arden's coming ; let's to them  
And see what they have done.     [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

*The Kentish Coast opposite the Isle of Sheppy.*

*Here enters Arden and Franklin.*

*Arden.* Oh, ferryman, where art thou?

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

*Ferryman.* Here, here, go before to the boat, and I will follow you.

*Arden.* We have great haste ; I pray thee, come away.

*Ferryman.* Fie, what a mist is here !

*Arden.* This mist, my friend, is mystical,  
Like to a good companion's smoky brain,  
That was half drowned with new ale overnight.

*Ferryman.* 'Twere pity but his skull were opened to  
make more chimney room. 10

*Franklin.* Friend, what's thy opinion of this mist?

*Ferryman.* I think 'tis like to a curst wife in a little  
house, that never leaves her husband till she have  
driven him out at doors with a wet pair of eyes ;  
then looks he as if his house were a-fire, or some of  
his friends dead.

*Arden.* Speaks thou this of thine own experience?

*Ferryman.* Perhaps, ay ; perhaps, no : For my wife is  
as other women are, that is to say, governed by the  
moon. 20

*Franklin.* By the moon? how, I pray thee?

*Ferryman.* Nay, thereby lies a bargain, and you shall not have it fresh and fasting.

*Arden.* Yes, I pray thee, good ferryman.

*Ferryman.* Then for this once; let it be midsummer moon, but yet my wife has another moon.

*Franklin.* Another moon?

*Ferryman.* Ay, and it hath influences and eclipses.

*Arden.* Why, then, by this reckoning you sometimes play the man in the moon? 30

*Ferryman.* Ay, but you had not best to meddle with that moon, lest I scratch you by the face with my bramble-bush.

*Arden.* I am almost stifled with this fog; come, let's away.

*Franklin.* And, sirrah, as we go, let us have some more of your bold yeomanry.

*Ferryman.* Nay, by my troth, sir, but flat knavery.

[*Exeunt.*]

### SCENE III

*Another place on the coast.*

*Here enters Will at one door, and Shakebag at another.*

*Shakebag.* Oh, Will, where art thou?

*Will.* Here, Shakebag, almost in hell's mouth, where I cannot see my way for smoke.

*Shakebag.* I pray thee speak still that we may meet by the sound, for I shall fall into some ditch or other, unless my feet see better than my eyes.

*Will.* Didst thou ever see better weather to run away with another man's wife, or play with a wench at pot-finger? 9

*Shakebag.* No ; this were a fine world for chandlers, if this weather would last ; for then a man should never dine nor sup without candle-light. But, sirrah Will, what horses are those that passed ?

*Will.* Why, didst thou hear any ?

*Shakebag.* Ay, that I did.

*Will.* My life for thine, 'twas Arden, and his companion, and then all our labour's lost.

*Shakebag.* Nay, say not so, for if it be they, they may haply lose their way as we have done, and then we may chance meet with them. 20

*Will.* Come, let us go on like a couple of blind pilgrims.

[ *Then Shakebag falls into a ditch.*

*Shakebag.* Help, Will, help, I am almost drowned.

*Here enters the Ferryman.*

*Ferryman.* Who's that that calls for help ?

*Will.* 'Twas none here, 'twas thou thyself.

*Ferryman.* I came to help him that called for help.

Why, how now ? who is this that's in the ditch ?

You are well enough served to go without a guide  
such weather as this.

*Will.* Sirrah, what companies hath passed your ferry  
this morning? 30

*Ferryman.* None but a couple of gentlemen, that went  
to dine at my Lord Cheiny's.

*Will.* Shakebag, did not I tell thee as much?

*Ferryman.* Why, sir, will you have any letters carried  
to them?

*Will.* No, sir ; get you gone.

*Ferryman.* Did you ever see such a mist as this ?

*Will.* No, nor such a fool as will rather be hought than  
get his way.

*Ferryman.* Why, sir, this is no Hough-Monday ; you  
are deceived.—What's his name, I pray you, sir ? 41

*Shakebag.* His name is Black Will.

*Ferryman.* I hope to see him one day hanged upon a  
hill. [Exit Ferryman.

*Shakebag.* See how the sun hath cleared the foggy mist,  
Now we have missed the mark of our intent.

*Here enters Greene, Mosbie, and Alice.*

*Mosbie.* Black Will and Shakebag, what make you  
here?

What, is the deed done ? is Arden dead ?

*Will.* What could a blinded man perform in arms?

Saw you not how till now the sky was dark, 50

That neither horse nor man could be discerned?

Yet did we hear their horses as they passed.

*Greene.* Have they escaped you, then, and passed the ferry?

*Shakebag.* Ay, for a while ; but here we two will stay,  
And at their coming back meet with them once more.

Zounds, I was ne'er so toiled in all my life

In following so slight a task as this.

*Mosbie.* How cam'st thou so berayed ?

*Will.* With making false footing in the dark ;  
He needs would follow them without a guide. 60

*Alice.* Here 's to pay for a fire and good cheer :  
Get you to Feversham to the Flower-de-luce,  
And rest yourselves until some other time.

*Greene.* Let me alone ; it most concerns my state,

*Will.* Ay, Mistress Arden, this will serve the turn,  
In case we fall into a second fog.

[*Excunt Greene, Will, and Shakebag.*]

*Mosbie.* These knaves will never do it, let us give it over.

*Alice.* First tell me how you like my new device :  
Soon, when my husband is returning back,  
You and I both marching arm in arm, 70  
Like loving friends, we 'll meet him on the way,  
And boldly beard and brave him to his teeth.  
When words grow hot and blows begin to rise,  
I 'll call those cutters forth your tenement,

Who, in a manner to take up the fray,  
Shall wound my husband Hornsby to the death.

*Mosbie.* A fine device ! why, this deserves a kiss.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE IV

*The open country.*

*Here enters Dick Reede and a Sailor.*

*Sailor.* Faith, Dick Reede, it is to little end :  
His conscience is too liberal, and he too niggardly  
To part from any thing may do thee good.

*Reede.* He is coming from Shorlow as I understand ;  
Here I 'll intercept him, for at his house  
He never will vouchsafe to speak with me.  
If prayers and fair entreaties will not serve,  
Or make no battery in his flinty breast,

*Here enters Franklin, Arden, and Michael.*

I 'll curse the carle, and see what that will do.  
See where he comes to further my intent !— 10  
Master Arden, I am now bound to the sea ;  
My coming to you was about the plat  
Of ground which wrongfully you detain from me.  
Although the rent of it be very small,  
Yet it will help my wife and children,



Which here I leave in Feversham, God knows,  
Needy and bare: for Christ's sake, let them  
have it!

*Arden.* Franklin, hearest thou this fellow speak?  
That which he craves I dearly bought of him,  
Although the rent of it was ever mine.— 20  
Sirrah, you that ask these questions,  
If with thy clamorous impeaching tongue  
Thou rail on me, as I have heard thou dost,  
I'll lay thee up so close a twelve-month's day,  
As thou shalt neither see the sun nor moon.  
Look to it, for, as surely as I live,  
I'll banish pity if thou use me thus.

*Reede.* What, wilt thou do me wrong and threat me  
too,

Nay, then, I'll tempt thee, Arden, do thy worst.  
God, I beseech thee, show some miracle 30  
On thee or thine, in plaguing thee for this.  
That plot of ground which thou detains from me,  
I speak it in an agony of spirit,  
Be ruinous and fatal unto thee!  
Either there be butchered by thy dearest friends,  
Or else be brought for men to wonder at,  
Or thou or thine miscarry in that place,  
Or there run mad and end thy cursèd days!

*Franklin.* Fie, bitter knave, bridle thine envious tongue;  
For curses are like arrows shot upright, 40  
Which falling down light on the shooter's head.

*Reede.* Light where they will ! Were I upon the sea,  
 As oft I have in many a bitter storm,  
 And saw a dreadful southern flaw at hand,  
 The pilot quaking at the doubtful storm,  
 And all the sailors praying on their knees,  
 Even in that fearful time would I fall down,  
 And ask of God, whate'er betide of me,  
 Vengeance on Arden or some misevent  
 To show the world what wrong the carle hath done.  
 This charge I'll leave with my distressful wife, 51  
 My children shall be taught such prayers as these ;  
 And thus I go, but leave my curse with thee.

[*Exeunt Reede and Sailor.*]

*Arden.* It is the railingest knave in Christendom,  
 And oftentimes the villain will be mad ;  
 It greatly matters not what he says,  
 But I assure you I ne'er did him wrong.

*Franklin.* I think so, Master Arden.

*Arden.* Now that our horses are gone home before,  
 My wife may haply meet me on the way. 60  
 For God knows she is grown passing kind of late,  
 And greatly changed from  
 The old humour of her wonted frowardness,  
 And seeks by fair means to redeem old faults.

*Franklin.* Happy the change that alters for the best !  
 But see in any case you make no speech  
 Of the cheer we had at my Lord Cheiny's,  
 Although most bounteous and liberal,

For that will make her think herself more wronged,  
In that we did not carry her along ; 70  
For sure she grieved that she was left behind.

*Arden.* Come, Franklin, let us strain to mend our pace,  
And take her unawares playing the cook ;

*Here enters Alice and Mosbie.*

For I believe she'll strive to mend our cheer.

*Franklin.* Why, there's no better creatures in the world,  
Than women are when they are in good humours.

*Arden.* Who is that? Mosbie? what, so familiar?  
Injurious strumpet, and thou ribald knave,  
Untwine those arms.

*Alice.* Ay, with a sugared kiss let them untwine. 80

*Arden.* Ah, Mosbie! perjured beast! bear this and all!

*Mosbie.* And yet no horned beast; the horns are thine.

*Franklin.* O monstrous! Nay, then it is time to draw.

*Alice.* Help, help! they murder my husband.

*Here enters Will and Shakebag.*

*Shakebag.* Zounds, who injures Master Mosbie? Help,  
Will! I am hurt.

*Mosbie.* I may thank you, Mistress Arden, for this  
wound.

*[Exeunt Mosbie, Will, and Shakebag.]*

*Alice.* Ah, Arden, what folly blinded thee?

Ah, jealous harebrained man, what hast thou done!  
When we, to welcome thee with intended sport,

Came lovingly to meet thee on thy way, 90  
Thou drew'st thy sword, enraged with jealousy,  
And hurt thy friend whose thoughts were free from  
harm :

All for a worthless kiss and joining arms,  
Both done but merrily to try thy patience.  
And me unhappy that devised the jest,  
Which, though begun in sport, yet ends in blood !

*Franklin.* Marry, God defend me from such a jest !

*Alice.* Could'st thou not see us friendly smile on thee,  
When we joined arms, and when I kissed his  
cheek ?

Hast thou not lately found me over-kind ? 100

Did'st thou not hear me cry 'they murder thee' ?

Called I not help to set my husband free ?

No, ears and all were witch'd ; ah me accursed

To link in liking with a frantic man !

Henceforth I'll be thy slave, no more thy wife,

For with that name I never shall content thee.

If I be merry, thou straightways thinks me light ;

If sad, thou sayest the sullens trouble me ;

If well attired, thou thinks I will be gadding ;

If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye : 110

Thus am I still, and shall be while I die.

Poor wench abused by thy misgovernment !

*Arden.* But is it for truth that neither thou nor he

Intendedst malice in your misdemeanour ?

*Alice.* The heavens can witness of our harmless thoughts

*Arden.* Then pardon me, sweet Alice, and forgive this fault !

Forget but this and never see the like.  
Impose me penance, and I will perform it,  
For in thy discontent I find a death,—  
A death tormenting more than death itself. 120

*Alice.* Nay, had'st thou loved me as thou dost pretend,  
Thou wouldst have marked the speeches of thy friend,  
Who going wounded from the place, he said  
His skin was pierced only through my device ;  
And if sad sorrow taint thee for this fault,  
Thou would'st have followed him, and seen him  
dressed,

And cried him mercy whom thou hast misdone :  
Ne'er shall my heart be eased till this be done.

*Arden.* Content thee, sweet Alice, thou shalt have thy will,

Whate'er it be. For that I injured thee, 130  
And wronged my friend, shame scourgeth my  
offence ;

Come thou thyself, and go along with me,  
And be a mediator 'twixt us two.

*Franklin.* Why, Master Arden I know you what you do ?  
Will you follow him that hath dishonoured you ?

*Alice.* Why, canst thou prove I have been disloyal ?

*Franklin.* Why, Mosbie taunted your husband with the  
horn.

*Alice.* Ay, after he had reviled him

By the injurious name of perjured beast :  
He knew no wrong could spite a jealous man 140  
More than the hateful naming of the horn.

*Franklin.* Suppose 'tis true ; yet is it dangerous  
To follow him whom he hath lately hurt.

*Alice.* A fault confessed is more than half amends ;  
But men of such ill spirit as yourself  
Work crosses and debates 'twixt man and wife.

*Arden.* I pray thee, gentle Franklin, hold thy peace :  
I know my wife counsels me for the best.  
I'll seek out Mosbie where his wound is dressed,  
And salve this hapless quarrel if I may. 150

[*Exeunt Arden and Alice.*]

*Franklin.* He whom the devil drives must go perforce.  
Poor gentleman, how soon he is bewitched !  
And yet, because his wife is the instrument,  
His friends must not be lavish in their speech.

[*Exit Franklin.*]

## ACT V

## SCENE I

*A Street in Feversham.*

*Here enters Will, Shakebag, and Greene.*

*Will.* Sirrah Greene, when was I so long in killing a man?

*Greene.* I think we shall never do it ; let us give it over.

*Shakebag.* Nay, Zounds ! we'll kill him, though we be hanged at his door for our labour.

*Will.* Thou knowest, Greene, that I have lived in London this twelve years, where I have made some go upon wooden legs for taking the wall on me ; divers with silver noses for saying 'There goes Black Will !' I have cracked as many blades as thou hast nuts.

*Greene.* O monstrous lie ! 10

*Will.* Faith, in a manner I have. The bawdy-houses have paid me tribute ; there durst not a whore set up, unless she have agreed with me first for opening her shop-windows. For a cross word of a tapster I have pierced one barrel after another with my dagger, and held him by the ears till all his beer

hath run out. In Thames Street a brewer's cart was like to have run over me : I made no more ado, but went to the clerk and cut all the notches of his tallies and beat them about his head. I and my company have taken the constable from his watch, and carried him about the fields on a coltstaff. I have broken a sergeant's head with his own mace, and bailed whom I list with my sword and buckler. All the tenpenny-alehouses-men would stand every morning with a quart-pot in their hand, saying, 'Will it please your worship drink?' He that had not done so, had been sure to have had his sign pulled down and his lattice borne away the next night. To conclude, what have I not done? yet cannot do this; doubtless, he is preserved by miracle.

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*Here enters Alice and Michael.*

*Greene.* Hence, Will ! here comes Mistress Arden.

*Alice.* Ah, gentle Michael, art thou sure they 're friends?

*Michael.* Why, I saw them when they both shook hands.

When Mosbie bled, he even wept for sorrow,

And railed on Franklin that was cause of all.

No sooner came the surgeon in at doors,

But my master took to his purse and gave him  
money,

And, to conclude, sent me to bring you word 40

That Mosbie, Franklin, Bradshaw, Adam Fowle,



With divers of his neighbours and his friends,  
Will come and sup with you at our house this night.

*Alice.* Ah, gentle Michael, run thou back again,  
And, when my husband walks into the fair,  
Bid Mosbie steal from him and come to me ;  
And this night shall thou and Susan be made sure.

*Michael.* I'll go tell him.

*Alice.* And as thou goest, tell John cook of our guests,  
And bid him lay it on, spare for no cost. 50

[*Exit Michael.*

*Will.* Nay, and there be such cheer, we will bid ourselves.—

Mistress Arden, Dick Greene and I do mean to  
sup with you.

*Alice.* And welcome shall you be. Ah, gentlemen,  
How missed you of your purpose yesternight ?

*Greene.* 'Twas 'long of Shakebag, that unlucky villain.

*Shakebag.* Thou dost me wrong ; I did as much as  
any.

*Will.* Nay then, Mistress Arden, I'll tell you how it  
was :

When he should have locked with both his hilts,  
He in a bravery flourished o'er his head ;

With that comes Franklin at him lustily, 60  
And hurts the slave ; with that he slinks away.

Now his way had been to have come hand and feet,  
one and two round, at his costard ; he like a fool  
bears his sword-point half a yard out of danger.

I lie here for my life ; if the devil come, and he have no more strength than I have fence, he shall never beat me from this ward, I'll stand to it ; a buckler in a skilful hand is as good as a castle ; nay, 'tis better than a sconce, for I have tried it. 70  
Mosbie, perceiving this, began to faint :

With that comes Arden with his arming sword,  
And thrust him through the shoulder in a trice.

*Alice.* Ay, but I wonder why you both stood still.

*Will.* Faith, I was so amazed, I could not strike.

*Alice.* Ah, sirs, had he yesternight been slain,  
For every drop of his detested blood  
I would have crammed in angels in thy fist,  
And kissed thee, too, and hugged thee in my arms.

*Will.* Patient yourself, we cannot help it now. 80

Greene and we two will dog him through the fair,  
And stab him in the crowd, and steal away.

*Here enters Mosbie.*

*Alice.* It is impossible ; but here comes he  
That will, I hope, invent some surer means.  
Sweet Mosbie, hide thy arm, it kills my heart.

*Mosbie.* Ay, Mistress Arden, this is your favour.

*Alice.* Ah, say not so ; for when I saw thee hurt,  
I could have took the weapon thou let'st fall,  
And run at Arden ; for I have sworn  
That these mine eyes, offended with his sight, 90  
Shall never close till Arden's be shut up.

This night I rose and walked about the chamber,  
And twice or thrice I thought to have murdered  
him.

*Mosbie.* What, in the night? then had we been undone.

*Alice.* Why, how long shall he live?

*Mosbie.* Faith, Alice, no longer than this night.—

Black Will and Shakebag, will you two perform  
The complot that I have laid?

*Will.* Ay, or else think me a villain.

*Greene.* And rather than you shall want, I'll help myself.

*Mosbie.* You, Master Greene, shall single Franklin forth,  
And hold him with a long tale of strange news, 102  
That he may not come home till supper-time.

I'll fetch Master Arden home, and we like friends  
Will play a game or two at tables here.

*Alice.* But what of all this? how shall he be slain?

*Mosbie.* Why, Black Will and Shakebag locked within  
the counting-house

Shall at a certain watchword given rush forth.

*Will.* What shall the watchword be?

*Mosbie.* 'Now I take you'; that shall be the word: 110  
But come not forth before in any case.

*Will.* I warrant you. But who shall lock me in?

*Alice.* That will I do; thou'st keep the key thyself.

*Mosbie.* Come, Master Greene, go you along with me.  
See all things ready, Alice, against we come.

*Alice.* Take no care for that; send you him home.

[*Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.*]

And if he e'er go forth again, blame me.  
Come, Black Will, that in mine eyes art fair ;  
Next unto Mosbie do I honour thee ;  
Instead of fair words and large promises 120  
My hands shall play you golden harmony :  
How like you this? say, will you do it, sirs?

*Will.* Ay, and that bravely, too. Mark my device :  
Place Mosbie, being a stranger, in a chair,  
And let your husband sit upon a stool,  
That I may come behind him cunningly,  
And with a towel pull him to the ground,  
Then stab him till his flesh be as a sieve ;  
That done, bear him behind the Abbey,  
That those that find him murdered may suppose 130  
Some slave or other killed him for his gold.

*Alice.* A fine device ! you shall have twenty pound,  
And, when he is dead, you shall have forty more,  
And, lest you might be suspected staying here,  
Michael shall saddle you two lusty geldings ;  
Ride whither you will, to Scotland, or to Wales,  
I'll see you shall not lack, where'er you be.

*Will.* Such words would make one kill a thousand  
men !

Give me the key : which is the counting-house?

*Alice.* Here would I stay and still encourage you ; 140  
But that I know how resolute you are.

*Shakebag.* Tush, you are too faint-hearted ; we must  
do it.

*Alice.* But Mosbie will be there, whose very looks  
Will add unwonted courage to my thought,  
And make me the first that shall adventure on him.

*Will.* Tush, get you gone ; 'tis we must do the deed.  
When this door opens next, look for his death.

*[Exeunt Will and Shakebag.]*

*Alice.* Ah, would he now were here that it might open !  
I shall no more be closed in Arden's arms,  
That like the snakes of black Tisiphone 150  
Sting me with their embracings ! Mosbie's arms  
Shall compass me, and, were I made a star,  
I would have none other spheres but those.  
There is no nectar but in Mosbie's lips !  
Had chaste Diana kissed him, she like me  
Would grow love-sick, and from her watery bower  
Fling down Endymion and snatch him up :  
Then blame not me that slay a silly man  
Not half so lovely as Endymion.

*Here enters Michael.*

*Michael.* Mistress, my master is coming hard by. 160

*Alice.* Who comes with him ?

*Michael.* Nobody but Mosbie.

*Alice.* That's well, Michael. Fetch in the tables, and  
when thou hast done, stand before the counting-  
house door.

*Michael.* Why so ?

*Alice.* Black Will is locked within to do the deed.

*Michael.* What? shall he die to-night?

*Alice.* Ay, Michael.

*Michael.* But shall not Susan know it?

*Alice.* Yes, for she'll be as secret as ourselves. 170

*Michael.* That's brave. I'll go fetch the tables.

*Alice.* But, Michael, hark to me a word or two :

When my husband is come in, lock the street-door ;

He shall be murdered, or the guests come in.

[*Exit Michael.*]

*Here enters Arden and Mosbie.*

Husband, what mean you to bring Mosbie home?

Although I wished you to be reconciled,

'Twas more for fear of you than love of him.

Black Will and Greene are his companions,

And they are cutters, and may cut you short :

Therefore I thought it good to make you friends. 180

But wherefore do you bring him hither now?

You have given me my supper with his sight.

*Mosbie.* Master Arden, methinks your wife would have me gone.

*Arden.* No, good Master Mosbie ; women will be prating.

Alice, bid him welcome ; he and I are friends.

*Alice.* You may enforce me to it, if you will ;

But I had rather die than bid him welcome.

His company hath purchased me ill friends,

And therefore will I ne'er frequent it more.

*Mosbie.* —Oh, how cunningly she can dissemble ! 190

*Arden.* Now he is here, you will not serve me so.

*Alice.* I pray you be not angry or displeased ;  
I'll bid him welcome, seeing you'll have it so.

You are welcome, Master Mosbie ; will you sit down ?

*Mosbie.* I know I am welcome to your loving husband ;  
But for yourself, you speak not from your heart.

*Alice.* And if I do not, sir, think I have cause.

*Mosbie.* Pardon me, Master Arden ; I'll away.

*Arden.* No, good Master Mosbie.

*Alice.* We shall have guests enough, though you go  
hence. 200

*Mosbie.* I pray you, Master Arden, let me go.

*Arden.* I pray thee, Mosbie, let her prate her fill.

*Alice.* The doors are open, sir, you may be gone.

*Michael.* —Nay, that's a lie, for I have locked the doors.

*Arden.* Sirrah, fetch me a cup of wine, I'll make them  
friends.

And, gentle Mistress Alice, seeing you are so stout,  
You shall begin ! frown not, I'll have it so.

*Alice.* I pray you meddle with that you have to do.

*Arden.* Why, Alice ! how can I do too much for him

Whose life I have endangered without cause ? 210

*Alice.* 'Tis true ; and, seeing 'twas partly through my  
means,

I am content to drink to him for this once.

Here, Master Mosbie ! and I pray you, henceforth

Be you as strange to me as I to you.

Your company hath purchased me ill friends,

And I for you, God knows, have undeserved  
Been ill spoken of in every place ;  
Therefore henceforth frequent my house no more.

*Mosbie.* I'll see your husband in despite of you.

Yet, Arden, I protest to thee by heaven, 220

Thou ne'er shalt see me more after this night,

I'll go to Rome rather than be forsworn.

*Arden.* Tush, I'll have no such vows made in my house.

*Alice.* Yes, I pray you, husband, let him swear ;

And, on that condition, Mosbie, pledge me here.

*Mosbie.* Ay, as willingly as I mean to live.

*Arden.* Come, Alice, is our supper ready yet ?

*Alice.* It will by then you have played a game at tables.

*Arden.* Come, Master Mosbie, what shall we play for ?

*Mosbie.* Three games for a French crown, sir, and please  
you. 230

*Arden.* Content.

[*Then they play at the tables. Enter Will  
and Shakebag.*]

*Will.* —Can he not take him yet? what a spite is  
that?

*Alice.* —Not yet, Will ; take heed he see thee not.

*Will.* —I fear he will spy me as I am coming.

*Michael.* —To prevent that, creep betwixt my legs.

*Mosbie.* One ace, or else I lose the game.

*Arden.* Marry, sir, there's two for failing.

*Mosbie.* Ah, Master Arden, 'now I can take you.'

[*Then Will pulls him down with a towel.*]



*Arden.* Mosbie ! Michael ! Alice ! what will you do ?

*Will.* Nothing but take you up, sir, nothing else. 240

*Mosbie.* There's for the pressing iron you told me of.

[*Stabs him.*

*Shakebag.* And there's for the ten pound in my sleeve.

[*Stabs him.*

*Alice.* What ! groans thou ? nay, then give me the weapon !

Take this for hindering Mosbie's love and mine.

[*She stabs him.*

*Michael.* O, mistress !

*Will.* Ah, that villain will betray us all.

*Mosbie.* Tush, fear him not ; he will be secret.

*Michael.* Why, dost thou think I will betray myself ?

*Shakebag.* In Southwark dwells a bonny northern lass,  
The widow Chambly ; I'll to her house now, 250  
And if she will not give me harborough,  
I'll make booty of the quean even to her smock.

*Will.* Shift for yourselves ; we two will leave you now.

*Alice.* First lay the body in the counting-house.

[*Then they lay the body in the Counting-house.*

*Will.* We have our gold ; Mistress Alice, adieu ;

Mosbie, farewell, and Michael, farewell too.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter Susan.*

*Susan.* Mistress, the guests are at the doors.

Hearken, they knock : what, shall I let them in ?

*Alice.* Mosbie, go thou and bear them company.

[*Exit Mosbie.*

And, Susan, fetch water and wash away this blood.

*Susan.* The blood cleaveth to the ground and will not  
out. 261

*Alice.* But with my nails I'll scrape away the blood;—

The more I strive, the more the blood appears!

*Susan.* What's the reason, Mistress, can you tell?

*Alice.* Because I blush not at my husband's death.

*Here enters Mosbie.*

*Mosbie.* How now? what's the matter? is all well?

*Alice.* Ay, well, if Arden were alive again.

In vain we strive, for here his blood remains.

*Mosbie.* Why, strew rushes on it, can you not?

This wench doth nothing: fall unto the work. 270

*Alice.* 'Twas thou that made me murder him.

*Mosbie.* What of that?

*Alice.* Nay, nothing, Mosbie, so it be not known.

*Mosbie.* Keep thou it close, and 'tis impossible.

*Alice.* Ah, but I cannot! was he not slain by me?

My husband's death torments me at the heart.

*Mosbie.* It shall not long torment thee, gentle Alice;

I am thy husband, think no more of him.

*Here enters Adam Fowle and Bradshaw.*

*Bradshaw.* How now, Mistress Arden? what ail you weep?

*Mosbie.* Because her husband is abroad so late. 280

A couple of ruffians threatened him yesternight,  
And she, poor soul, is afraid he should be hurt.  
*Adam.* Is't nothing else? tush, he'll be here anon.

*Here enters Greene.*

*Greene.* Now, Mistress Arden, lack you any guests?

*Alice.* Ah, Master Greene, did you see my husband lately?

*Greene.* I saw him walking behind the Abbey even now.

*Here enters Franklin.*

*Alice.* I do not like this being out so late.—

Master Franklin, where did you leave my husband?

*Franklin.* Believe me I saw him not since morning.

Fear you not, he'll come anon; meantime 290

You may do well to bid his guests sit down.

*Alice.* Ay, so they shall; Master Bradshaw, sit you there;

I pray you, be content, I'll have my will.

Master Mosbie, sit you in my husband's seat.

*Michael.* —Susan, shall thou and I wait on them?

Or, an thou sayest the word, let us sit down too.

*Susan.* —Peace, we have other matters now in hand.

I fear me, Michael, all will be bewrayed.

*Michael.* —Tush, so it be known that I shall marry thee  
in the morning, I care not though I be hanged ere  
night. But to prevent the worst, I'll buy some  
ratsbane. 301

*Susan.* —Why, Michael, wilt thou poison thyself?

*Michael.* —No, but my mistress, for I fear she'll tell.

*Susan.* —Tush, Michael; fear not her, she's wise enough.

*Mosbie.* Sirrah Michael, give's a cup of beer.—

Mistress Arden, here's to your husband.

*Alice.* My husband!

*Franklin.* What ails you, woman, to cry so suddenly?

*Alice.* Ah, neighbours, a sudden qualm came o'er my heart;

My husband being forth torments my mind. 310

I know something's amiss, he is not well;

Or else I should have heard of him ere now.

*Mosbie.* —She will undo us through her foolishness.

*Greene.* Fear not, Mistress Arden, he's well enough.

*Alice.* Tell not me; I know he is not well:

He was not wont for to stay thus late.

Good Master Franklin, go and seek him forth,

And if you find him, send him home to me,

And tell him what a fear he hath put me in.

*Franklin.* —I like not this; I pray God all be well. 320

I'll seek him out, and find him if I can.

[*Exeunt Franklin, Mosbie, and Greene.*]

*Alice.* —Michael, how shall I do to rid the rest away?

*Michael.* —Leave that to my charge, let me alone.

'Tis very late, Master Bradshaw,

And there are many false knaves abroad,

And you have many narrow lanes to pass.

*Bradshaw.* Faith, friend Michael, and thou sayest true.

Therefore I pray thee light's forth and lend's a link.

[*Exeunt Bradshaw, Adam, and Michael.*]

*Alice.* Michael, bring them to the doors, but do not stay ;  
You know I do not love to be alone. 330

—Go, Susan, and bid thy brother come :

But wherefore should he come? Here is nought  
but fear ;

Stay, Susan, stay, and help to counsel me.

*Susan.* Alas. I counsel ! fear frights away my wits.

*[Then they open the counting-house door,  
and look upon Arden.]*

*Alice.* See, Susan, where thy quondam master lies,  
Sweet Arden, smeared in blood and filthy gore.

*Susan.* My brother, you, and I shall rue this deed.

*Alice.* Come, Susan, help to lift his body forth,  
And let our salt tears be his obsequies.

*Here enters Mosbie and Greene.*

*Mosbie.* How now, Alice, whither will you bear him ?

*Alice.* Sweet Mosbie, art thou come? Then weep that will:  
I have my wish in that I joy thy sight. 342

*Greene.* Well, it behoves us to be circumspect.

*Mosbie.* Ay, for Franklin thinks that we have murdered  
him.

*Alice.* Ay, but he cannot prove it for his life.

We'll spend this night in dalliance and in sport.

*Here enters Michael.*

*Michael.* O mistress, the Mayor and all the watch  
Are coming towards our house with glaives and bills

*Alice.* Make the door fast ; let them not come in.

*Mosbie.* Tell me, sweet Alice, how shall I escape? 350

*Alice.* Out at the back-door, over the pile of wood,

And for one night lie at the Flower-de-luce.

*Mosbie.* That is the next way to betray myself.

*Greene.* Alas, Mistress Arden, the watch will take me hers,

And cause suspicion, where else would be none.

*Alice.* Why, take that way that Master Mosbie doth ;

But first convey the body to the fields.

[*Then they bear the body into the fields.*]

*Mosbie.* Until to-morrow, sweet Alice, now farewell :

And see you confess nothing in any case.

*Greene.* Be resolute, Mistress Alice, betray us not, 360

But cleave to us as we will stick to you.

[*Exeunt Mosbie and Greene.*]

*Alice.* Now, let the judge and juries do their worst :

My house is clear, and now I fear them not.

*Susan.* As we went, it snowed all the way,

Which makes me fear our footsteps will be spied.

*Alice.* Peace, fool, the snow will cover them again.

*Susan.* But it had done before we came back again.

*Alice.* Hark, hark, they knock ! go, Michael, let them in.

*Here enters the Mayor and the Watch.*

How now, Master Mayor, have you brought my  
husband home ?

*Mayor.* I saw him come into your house an hour ago. 370

*Alice.* You are deceived ; it was a Londoner.

*Mayor.* Mistress Arden, know you not one that is called  
Black Will?

*Alice.* I know none such : what mean these questions?

*Mayor.* I have the Council's warrant to apprehend him.

*Alice.* —I am glad it is no worse.

Why, Master Mayor, think you I harbour any such?

*Mayor.* We are informed that here he is ;

And therefore pardon us, for we must search.

*Alice.* Ay, search, and spare you not, through every  
room :

Were my husband at home, you would not offer  
this. 380

*Here enters Franklin.*

Master Franklin, what mean you come so sad?

*Franklin.* Arden, thy husband and my friend, is slain.

*Alice.* Ah, by whom? Master Franklin, can you tell?

*Franklin.* I know not ; but behind the Abbey

There he lies murdered in most piteous case.

*Mayor.* But, Master Franklin, are you sure 'tis he?

*Franklin.* I am too sure ; would God I were deceived.

*Alice.* Find out the murderers, let them be known.

*Franklin.* Ay, so they shall : come you along with us.

*Alice.* Wherefore? 390

*Franklin.* Know you this hand-towel and this knife?

*Susan.* —Ah, Michael, through this thy negligence  
Thou hast betrayed and undone us all.

*Michael.* —I was so afraid I knew now what I did :

I thought I had thrown them both into the well.

*Alice.* It is the pig's blood we had to supper.

But wherefore stay you? find out the murderers.

*Mayor.* I fear me you'll prove one of them yourself.

*Alice.* I one of them? what mean such questions?

*Franklin.* I fear me he was murdered in this house 400

And carried to the fields; for from that place

Backwards and forwards may you see

The print of many feet within the snow.

And look about this chamber where we are,

And you shall find part of his guiltless blood;

For in his slipshoe did I find some rushes,

Which argueth he was murdered in this room.

*Mayor.* Look in the place where he was wont to sit.

See, see! his blood! it is too manifest.

*Alice.* It is a cup of wine that Michael shed. 410

*Michael.* Ay, truly.

*Franklin.* It is his blood, which, strumpet, thou hast shed.

But if I live, thou and thy 'complices

Which have conspired and wrought his death shall rue it.

*Alice.* Ah, Master Franklin, God and heaven can tell

I loved him more than all the world beside.

But bring me to him, let me see his body.

*Franklin.* Bring that villain and Mosbie's sister too;

And one of you go to the Flower-de-luce,

And seek for Mosbie, and apprehend him too. 420

[*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE II

*An obscure street in London.*

*Here enters Shakebag solus.*

*Shakebag.* The widow Chambly in her husband's days I  
kept ;

And now he's dead, she is grown so stout

She will not know her old companions.

I came thither, thinking to have had harbour

As I was wont,

And she was ready to thrust me out at doors ;

But whether she would or no, I got me up,

And as she followed me, I spurned her down the  
stairs,

And broke her neck, and cut her tapster's throat,

And now I am going to fling them in the Thames.

I have the gold ; what care I though it be known !

I'll cross the water and take sanctuary.

*[Exit.]*

## SCENE III

*Arden's House at Feversham.*

*Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Franklin,  
Michael, and Susan.*

*Mayor.* See, Mistress Arden, where your husband lies ;  
Confess this foul fault and be penitent.

*Alice.* Arden, sweet husband, what shall I say ?  
The more I sound his name, the more he bleeds ;  
This blood condemns me, and in gushing forth  
Speaks as it falls, and asks me why I did it.  
Forgive me, Arden : I repent me now,  
And, would my death save thine, thou should'st not  
die.

Rise up, sweet Arden, and enjoy thy love,  
And frown not on me when we meet in heaven : 10  
In heaven I'll love thee, though on earth I did not

*Mayor.* Say, Mosbie, what made thee murder him ?

*Franklin.* Study not for an answer ; look not down :  
His purse and girdle found at thy bed's head  
Witness sufficiently thou didst the deed ;  
It bootless is to swear thou didst it not.

*Mosbie.* I hired Black Will and Shakebag, ruffians both,  
And they and I have done this murderous deed.  
But wherefore stay we ? Come and bear me hence.

*Franklin.* Those ruffians shall not escape ; I will up to  
London, 20

And get the Council's warrant to apprehend them.

[*Excunt.*

## SCENE IV

*The Kentish Coast.*

*Here enters Will.*

*Will.* Shakebag, I hear, hath taken sanctuary,  
But I am so pursued with hues and cries  
For petty robberies that I have done,  
That I can come unto no sanctuary.  
Therefore must I in some oyster-boat  
At last be fain to go on board some hoy,  
And so to Flushing. There is no staying here.  
At Sittingburgh the watch was like to take me,  
And had not I with my buckler covered my head,  
And run full blank at all adventures, 10  
I am sure I had ne'er gone further than that place ;  
For the constable had twenty warrants to apprehend me,  
Besides that, I robbed him and his man once at  
Gadshill.  
Farewell, England ; I'll to Flushing now.

[*Exit Will.*

## SCENE V

*Justice-room at Feversham.*

*Here enters the Mayor, Mosbie, Alice, Michael, Susan,  
and Bradshaw.*

*Mayor.* Come, make haste and bring away the prisoners.

*Bradshaw.* Mistress Arden, you are now going to God,

And I am by the law condemned to die

About a letter I brought from Master Greene.

I pray you, Mistress Arden, speak the truth :

Was I ever privy to your intent or no.

*Alice.* What should I say? You brought me such a  
a letter,

But I dare swear thou knewest not the contents.

Leave now to trouble me with worldly things,

And let me meditate upon my saviour Christ, 10

Whose blood must save me for the blood I shed.

*Mosbie.* How long shall I live in this hell of grief?

Convey me from the presence of that strumpet.

*Alice.* Ah, but for thee I had never been a strumpet.

What cannot oaths and protestations do,

When men have opportunity to woo?

I was too young to sound thy villainies,

But now I find it and repent too late.

*Susan.* Ah, gentle brother, wherefore should I die?

I knew not of it till the deed was done. 20

*Mosbie.* For thee I mourn more than for myself;

But let it suffice, I cannot save thee now.

*Michael.* And if your brother and my mistress

Had not promised me you in marriage,

I had ne'er given consent to this foul deed.

*Mayor.* Leave to accuse each other now,

And listen to the sentence I shall give.

Bear Mosbie and his sister to London straight,

Where they in Smithfield must be executed;

Bear Mistress Arden unto Canterbury, 30

Where her sentence is she must be burnt;

Michael and Bradshaw in Feversham must suffer  
death.

*Alice.* Let my death make amends for all my sins.

*Mosbie.* Fie upon women! this shall be my song;

But bear me hence, for I have lived too long.

*Susan.* Seeing no hope on earth, in heaven is my hope.

*Michael.* Faith, I care not, seeing I die with Susan.

*Bradshaw.* My blood be on his head that gave the  
sentence.

*Mayor.* To speedy execution with them all! [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE VI

*Here enters Franklin.*

*Franklin.* Thus have you seen the truth of Arden's death.

As for the ruffians, Shakebag and Black Will,  
The one took sanctuary, and, being sent for out,  
Was murdered in Southwark as he passed  
To Greenwich, where the Lord Protector lay.  
Black Will was burned in Flushing on a stage ;  
Greene was hanged at Osbridge in Kent ;  
The painter fled and how he died we know not.  
But this above the rest is to be noted :  
Arden lay murdered in that plot of ground 10  
Which he by force and violence held from Reede ;  
And in the grass his body's print was seen  
Two years and more after the deed was done.  
Gentlemen, we hope you'll pardon this naked  
tragedy,  
Wherein no filed points are foisted in  
To make it gracious to the ear or eye ;  
For simple truth is gracious enough,  
And needs no other points of glosing stuff. [*Exit.*

# GLOSSARY

**ABHORS FROM**, differs entirely from; I. 54; an uncommon use. Dr. Murray quotes *For. A. and M.*; II. 357, 'It did nothing at all abhor from nature.'

**ANGEL**, the coin of that name; II. i. 89, etc.

**ARMING SWORD**, a large two-handed sword, V. i. 72.

**BASILISK**, a fabulous serpent supposed to kill by its look, a cockatrice; I. 215. Cf. 'Would they were basilisks to strike thee dead.'—*Richard III.*, III. ii. 151.

**BEDEEM**, forbode, 'doom me to'; III. iii. 31; not quoted by Dr. Murray.

**BEDESMAN**, one who says prayers for another, 'humble servant'; III. vi. 120.

**BEKAYED**, befouled; IV. iii. 58. Cf. 'Was ever man so rayed.'—*Shrew*, IV. i. 3.

**BEWRAYED**, betrayed; III. ii. 27.

**BLAB**, talk; I. 135. Used both as a noun and a verb.

**BLOCK**, obstacle; I. 137.

**BODKIN**, a tailor's awl; I. 313.

**BOLSTERED**, matted with blood; III. i. 73. Cf. 'Blood-bolstered Banquo.'—*Macbeth*, IV. i. 123.

**BOTCHER**, a jobbing tailor; I. 25, 316. Cf. Hulcoet, 'A tailor, bodger, botcher, mender or patcher of old garments.'

**BRABLE**, quarrel; IV. i. 77.

**BROKAGE**, petty dealing; here especially dealing in old clothes; I. 26.

**BUGS**, hobgoblins; III. ii. 19.

**CAUSELESS**, adv., without cause, I. 358.

**CHOP ME IN**, interrupts suddenly; III. vi. 130; 'me' is a dative; chop is used in the sense of doing quickly. Cf. *Richard III.*, I. iv. 160, 'Then we will chop him in the malmsey butt.'

**COIL**, trouble, III. vi. 5.

**COISTRIL**, a paltry young fellow; III. ii. 41, 58. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. iii. 43, 'A coward and a coistril.'

**COPESMATE**, market-mate, companion; III. v. 104. Cf. *Lucrece*, 925, 'Misshapen Time, copesmate of ugly Night.'

**COLTSTAFF**, a staff used by two persons for carrying 'cows', i.e. tubs; V. i. 22. Cf. *Merry Wives*, III. iii. 156, 'Where's the cowlstaff?'

**COSTARD**, head; V. i. 63; literally a large ribbed apple. Frequent in Shakespeare.

**CROWN**, crown-piece; III. vi. 132.

**CURST**, shrewish; IV. ii. 12.

**CUTTER**, bully, cutthroat; I. 522; IV. iii. 74, etc. Cf. Harrison's *England*, II. 16, 'Some desperate cutters we have.'

**DAG**, pistol; III. vi. 9, 131. The derivation is not known.

**DALLYING**, delaying, trifling; I. 397.

**DISPOSE**, disposal; I. 606. Common in Shakespeare.

**DISTRESSFUL**, miserable; III. v. 56; IV. iv. 51. Cf. *Henry V.*, IV. i. 287, 'Crammed with distressful bread.'

**DRIFTS**, plots; I. 178, 450, etc.

**EAR**, plough; III. v. 24.

**ESCHEW**, avoid; I. 347.

**FLAW**, gust of wind; IV. iv. 44.

**FORSLOWED**, delayed; III. v. 85.

- Cf. 3 *Henry VI.*, II. iii. 56, 'For-slow no longer.'
- FOSTER, forester; III. iii. 13.
- FROLIC, used as an exclamation = 'cheer up'; I. 512. Cf. Kyd's *Jeronimo*, I. i. 1.
- GIGLOT, a wanton woman, III. v. 87; connected with 'giggle.'
- GLAIVES, swords; V. i. 348.
- GLOSING, wordy; V. vi. 18.
- HANSEL, confirm, seal; II. i. 117.
- HARBOROUGH, old form of harbour; V. i. 251.
- HORNSBY, cuckold; IV. iii. 76.
- HOUGHT, hocked or hamstrung; IV. iii. 38.
- IMPETRATE, get by asking; II. ii. 16.
- JETS, struts; I. 30. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III. iii. 4, 'Giants may jet through.'
- LAY IT ON, fall to work; V. i. 50. Cf. *Winter's Tale*, IV. iii. 43, 'My father hath made her mistress of the feast and she lays it on.'
- LEAVE, cease; III. vi. 72, etc.
- LORDAINE, clown, IV. i. 58.
- MISEVENT, mishap; IV. iv. 49.
- MISTAKING, misunderstanding; IV. i. 27.
- MITHRIDATE, antidote; I. 383. Called after the famous King of Pontus, who made himself poison-proof. Greene uses the word.
- MUSCADO, musket; III. vi. 20.
- MUTCHADO, moustache; II. i. 54.
- PANTOFLES, slippers; II. ii. 9.
- PASSIONATE, sorrowful; III. v. 45. Cf. *John II.*, 544, 'She is sad and passionate.'
- PLANCHERS, planks; I. 42. 'Planch'd' is found in *Measure for Measure*, IV. i. 3.
- PLATFORM, scheme; II. i. 100. Cf. 1 *Henry VI.*, II. i. 77.
- PRECISIAN, puritan; III. ii. 18.
- PRICK-EARED, III. ii. 62; cf. *Henry V.*, II. i. 44, 'Prick-eared cur of Iceland.'
- QUALM, fit of nausea; III. vi. 67; V. i. 309.
- QUARTERAGE, quarterly payment; II. ii. 98.
- RACE, raze down; I. 47, 118.
- RELIGIOUS, devout; I. 587.
- SCONCE, small fort; V. i. 70.
- SECURELY, without misgiving; I. 50.
- SLIPSHOE, slipper; V. i. 406.
- STANDINGS, place of vantage, ambush; III. vi. 38.
- STOUT, proud, overbearing; V. i. 206, II. 2. Cf. 'I will be strange, stout, in yellow stockings.'—*Twelfth Night*, II. v. 185, and 2 *Henry VI.*, I. i. 187.
- SULLENS, moroseness; IV. iv. 108. Cf. *Richard II.*, II. i. 139: 'Let them die that age and sullens have.'
- SURE, betrothed; I. 151. Cf. *Merry Wives*, V. v. 237.
- SUSPECT, suspicion; I. i. 130. Cf. Sonnet LXX. 'The ornament of beauty is suspect.'
- TICING, enticing; I. 197.
- TRUG, a drab; I. 499. Greene uses the word.
- TRULL, worthless woman; I. 498.
- TRUSS, tie up for hanging; III. vi. 125; here = 'get yourself trussed.'
- WATCHET, pale blue; II. i. 56.
- WAGER, give a wage to; I. 523. Shakespeare uses 'wage' in this sense, *Coriolanus*, V. vi. 40.
- WHISTLY, silently; III. iii. 9.
- YEOMANRY, homespun wit; IV. ii. 37.



## NOTES

In the Quartos there are no divisions of acts and scenes.

A, B, C—1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quartos.

I. i. 4. *Patents*; the plural is always used in A, cf. *Richard II.* II. i. 202; II. iii. 130.

I. i. 14. Contrast Holinshed:—'He, *i.e.* Arden, was contented to wink at her filthy disorder,' and *Wardmote Book*:—'All which things the said Arden did well know and wilfully did permit and suffer the same.' He was afraid to offend Lord North, 'father-in-law unto Alice Arden,' whose servant Mosbie had been. This North was the father of the translator of Plutarch.

I. i. 15. *Pass*; so Bullen for *past*, A, B, C.

I. i. 25. *Botcher*, is not 'butcher,' but a mender of old clothes.

I. i. 48. *Jealous*: spelt *jelyouse*, and pronounced so throughout the play.

I. i. 60. The reference is to Ovid's *Elegy*, 'Ad Auroram ne properet.'—*Amor.* i. 13.

I. i. 61. Most editions reject *often*. If we retain it the line is an Alexandrine. Cf. i. 153, 167, 238, 479; III. v. 73, etc.

I. i. 105. *Flower-de-luce*. 'An inn, formerly situated in Abbey Street, nearly opposite Arden's house.' C. E. Donne, *An Essay on the Tragedy of Arden of Faversham*, 1873.

I. i. 117. *thy house of force*, *i.e.* 'fortified house.'

I. i. 135. *narrow*: so all editors; but the *marrow-prying* of A may be correct. *Blab* is either a verb with *and* omitted after it, or a noun, the subject of *hinder*.

I. i. 154. An allusion to verses or inscriptions on tapestry hangings.

I. i. 159. Cf. 'I'll write to him a very taunting letter.'—*As You Like It*, III. v. 134.

I. i. 167. 'It was popularly supposed that a virgin might save a criminal from the gallows by offering to marry him.—See note to my edition of Marston, III. 190-1.'—Bullen.

I. i. 172. Perhaps *worth* should be omitted.

I. i. 174. *Bolton* is 'Boughton, looking down on Canterbury.'—Donne.

I. i. 247. The name 'Clarke' is apparently our author's invention, like the name and character of Franklin. The painter's name was William Blackburn.

I. i. 266. *Leave*; Tyrrell reads *love*.

I. i. 278. *makes*: this singular with a plural subject is frequent in our play; cf. *Enters* in the stage directions with a plural, and I. 151, 437, 502; II. i. 1; III. i. 43 and 83; v. 38, etc. Consult Mr. Verity's note on *Edward II.*, I. iv. 362, Temple Dramatists.

I. i. 312. The statute in question was 37 Edward III. c. 9.

I. i. 314. 'The making of Spanish needles was first taught in England by Elias Crowse a Germane about the eight yeere of Queene Elizabeth, and in Queen Marie's time there was a Negro made fine Spanish needles in Cheapeside, but would never teach his art to any.' Quoted by Bullen from *Stowe*, edition 1631, p. 1038.

I. i. 314. 'Then Mosby having at his girdle a pressing iron of 14 pound weight stroke him on the head with the same so that he fell down and gave a great groan.'—Holinshed. Cf. v. i. 241.

I. i. 323. *Velvet drudge*: an allusion to Mosbie's tailoring.

I. i. 426. *Populous*: 'perhaps used in the sense of *thick, compact*.'—Bullen. Webster quotes this passage and explains, 'suitable to common people: hence common, inferior, vulgar.' Delius proposes *palpable*.

I. i. 466. *His in state*, i.e. 'his legally.'

I. i. 472. Cf. 'To wring the widow from her customary right.'—2 *Henry VI.*, v. i. 188.

I. i. 537. Tyrrell begins Act II. here.

I. i. 546. 'The gentleman is not in your books.'—*Much Ado*, I. i. 79.

I. i. 548. *make a gree*, come to an agreement. *Agree* was used adverbially for *at gree*.

II. i. 51. Mr. Bullen says that such a line as this 'might have come straight out of *Tamburlaine*.' He goes on, 'but in no other part of the play can we find a trace of Marlowe's influence.' Cf.—

'He sent a shaggy tottered staring slave,  
That when he speaks draws out his grisly beard,  
And winds it twice or thrice about his ear;  
Whose face has been a grindstone for men's swords.'

*Jew of Malta*, IV. v. 6.

and Shakespeare's—

'They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean-faced villain . . .  
A needy hollow-ey'd, sharp-looking wretch,  
A living dead man.'

*Com. of Errors*, v. i. 237.

II. i. 56. *all to torn*; 'entirely torn.' *To* in the sense of 'asunder' was commonly emphasised by *all*. Cf. 'Her wings . . . were all to ruffled.'—*Comus*, 380.

II. i. 58. *seam rent*: torn at the seams; 'Seam rent fellows.'—Ben Jonson.

II. i. 101. Imitated in Yarrington's *Two Tragedies* (iii. 2):—

'Grace me no graces, I respect no grace,  
But with a grace to give a graceless stab.'

II. i. 114. I have inserted *follow*.

II. ii. 3. Michael's letter is a curious effort at euphuism which calls to mind 'Love's Labour's Lost.' Note the fabulous natural history, the alliteration, and the alliterative proverb.

II. ii. 51. *old filching*='rare filching.' Cf. 'Yonder's old coil at hand.'—*Much Ado*, v. ii. 98.

II. ii. 63. The Counter was a London prison.

III. i. 5. *Couch dishonour as dishonour buds*. Warnke explains *Couch*='spread,' comparing 'couch-grass'; but there is no authority for this use. Is the word used in its surgical sense? The line would then='Cut the bud of dishonour so that it bursts into flower.' The surgical sense occurs in Holland's *Pliny*, 1601.

III. i. 13. *plenished* is Warnke's reading for the Quartos' *perisht*. Delius and Bullen read *flourished*.

III. i. 19. Cf. 'Sorrow and grief have vanquished all my powers.'  
—2 *Henry VI.*, II. i. 83.

III. i. 45. For this use of *sullen* cf. 'Why are thine eyes fixed to the sullen earth?'—2 *Henry VI.*, I. ii. 5, and Sonnet XXIX. 13.

III. ii. 47. A *cockshut* was a large net used to catch woodcocks after sunset. Cf. 'Cockshut time.'—*Richard III.*, v. iii. 70.

III. iii. 14. *rounded me*=brought me round.

III. iii. 40. *use*: Warnke quotes *Macbeth*, III. ii. 10, 'Using those thoughts which should indeed have died.'

III. iii. 44. *with the tide*, *i.e.* by boat on the Thames. Holinshed makes Greene and Black Will go to London, from Gravesend apparently, 'at the tide.'

III. iv. 18. 'The country near Rainham seems in the sixteenth century to have been so open as to have entitled it to the appellation of a Down.'—Donne. The spot had a bad reputation.

III. iv. 25. The Salutation is an inn mentioned in *Bartholomew Fair*.

III. iv. 31. *Except* is probably the printer's spelling of *accept*.

III. v. 4. *drink*: perhaps we ought to read *think*.

III. v. 17. *stirry*: this is meant by the *starry* of the Quartos.

III. v. 26. *hive*: Delius's correction of *heave*, A, B, C.

III. v. 51. *deep pathaires*: Delius conjectures *deep fet airs*; but Mr. Gollancz has probably solved the crux of the play by his suggestion,—“Pathaire,” I take to be some special form of “petarre,” *i.e.* “petard,” probably used in the metaphorical sense of passionate outburst.—(Lamb's *Specimens*, I. i. 297.) The use may be quite literal; for the form cf. Powell's *Tom of All Trades*, p. 163, 'An Enginere for making of Patars.'

III. v. 58. Quoted by Bullen as of 'genuine Shakesporean flavour.' He adds III. v. 112-130.

III. v. 116. Mr. Bullen puts a comma at *use*.

III. v. 131. *Thy*: several editors read *my*; but the sense is 'the good turns I have done you.'

III. v. 133. Warnke explains 'the quarrel has not yet thickened

to so impenetrable a fence as to separate us for ever.' Perhaps we should read 'is not thick-set ill.'

III. v. 157. An inconsistency. Cf. II. i. 75. Holinshed quotes from the letter, 'We have got a man for our purpose, we may thank my brother Bradshaw.' The *Wardmote Book* says nothing of Bradshaw's innocence.

III. vi. 144. *Shorlow* should be *Shurland* in Sheppey.

IV. i. 1. *gardant*: A, B read *gardeant*, modern editors *guardians*.

IV. i. 3. *path*: so Warnke for *pace* of A, B, C; but *pace* in the sense of 'path' is not impossible.

IV. i. 17. *desires*: so Warnke for *deserves*, A, B, C.

IV. i. 44. 'A certain broom-close betwixt Feversham and the Ferry.'—Holinshed.

IV. i. 45. Cf. *Ecclesiastes*, vii. 5.

IV. i. 96. *nor with cement*: Delius for *nor semell*, A, B.

IV. ii. 5. This mist is not in Holinshed. It is our poet's invention.

IV. ii. 30. Cf. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i. 237, etc.

IV. iii. 40. Hock Monday followed the second Sunday after Easter. See Brand's *Popular Antiquities*.

IV. iii. 68. Our poet blackens Mosbie for the same reason that he whitewashes Arden, *e.g.*: 'Master Arden both then and at other times had been greatly provoked by Mosbie to fight with him, but he would not.' 'Mosby at the first would not agree to that cowardly murdering of him.'—Holinshed.

IV. iv. 88. *harebrain*, A, B, C.

IV. iv. 89. *welcome thee with intended*; so Warnke for *welcome thy intended*, A, B, C.

V. i. 58. *Hilts* is common for 'hilt,' *e.g.* in Malory and Shakespeare; '*both his hilts*' is apparently an extension of this use. *Locked* I take to mean 'crossed or clashed swords,' with his adversary.

V. i. 105. *game or two at tables*: a sort of backgammon.

V. i. 155. Cf. the concluding lines of Ovid's *Elegy*, already alluded to, i. 60.

v. i. 338. 'Cecily Pounders did help to bear the dead corpse out into a meadow there, commonly called the Amery Croft.'—*Wardmote Book*.

v. iv. 5. Faversham was famous for its oysters.

v. v. 30. 'For the charges of brenning Mistress Arden and execution of George Bradshaw, XLIII s.'—*Canterbury Records*.

v. vi. 2. By the *Wardmote Book*, 'George Loosebagg, *i.e.* Shakebag, escaped at that time.' John Green, who like Mosbie was a tailor, was taken in July in Cornwall and brought to Faversham and hanged in chains within the liberties. Susan, in the play, combines the characters of Cecily Pounder, Mosbie's sister, and of Elizabeth Stafford, the maid-servant. Morsby and his sister were hanged in Smithfield; Michael Saunderson was 'drawn and hanged in chains' in Faversham, where Elizabeth was burnt. By the *Wardmote Book* Alice Arden did not stab her husband.





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